

# Human Resources and Economic Development: A South Sudanese Perspective

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## Abstract

Despite being an important factor in economic development and for influencing changes in economic structure, human resources remains a fundamental challenge for most Sub-Saharan African countries in general and South Sudan in particular. Examining the human resources' challenges from a range of interdisciplinary angles, this paper generated a good deal of discussion and debate on the role of human resources in national development in South Sudan, as well as how the nation has sought to improve the quality, practical skills and competencies of its human resources. In so doing, the research examines select characteristics of human resources development in South Sudan in the context of overall national development planning, Africa Human Development Report 2016, UNDP South Sudan Human Development Report 2015, South Sudan Development Plan (2011-2013), South Sudan's Vision 2040, African Continent's Agenda 2063 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The present challenges that confront South Sudan in the key policy area, namely the shortage of trained manpower and a lack of institutional capacity and infrastructure development are also elucidated. The study found that dearth of investment in quality education and training, lack of planning for the best possible utilization of available human capital both within the country and the diaspora and inequalities in human development are the roadblocks to achieving sustainable human resources and economic development in South Sudan. Increase in the quality of education, improving the investment climate for private sector development and expanding access to finance in South Sudan to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty and closing of the gaps between the labor market and the education system are strongly recommended.

**Keywords:** Human Resources; Economic Development; HR roles; South Sudan

## 1. Introduction

Through Sudan Peace Act which was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 21, 2002, a United States-sponsored Peace Agreement, known as the CPA, was reached in 2005 between the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) and the Government of Sudan in Khartoum. This started a six-year interim period leading to South Sudan's independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011 and became Africa's 55th country, 193<sup>rd</sup> member of the United Nations, joined World Bank Group and IMF in 2012, and became the 6<sup>th</sup> member of the East African Community (EAC) block in 2016. A landlocked country, South Sudan is one of

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the world's most underdeveloped with the low quality of life on the human development index scale and remained a nation where the maternal mortality and female illiteracy rates are one of the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa with the number of poor people at more than 7.2 million (about half of the population of the country) (World Bank 2022). Apart from the longest civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005), renewed conflicts in South Sudan in 2013 and 2016 have undermined the development gains achieved since independence. As a consequence, the country remained in a perplexity of fragility, economic stagnation and backwardness in spite of its nature and human resources. Poverty is all-pervading and is being reinforced by ongoing inter-communal conflict, massive displacement, and lack of infrastructure (UNDP 2020). Although various rounds of peace talks have been actively supported by the UN and neighboring countries, resulting in the signing of the R-ARCSS in 2018 and subsequent formation of Unity Government (RTGoNU) in 2020 and reconstitution of National Parliament (RTLTA) in 2021, large measure of hope for economic and livelihoods recovery and peace building are still far-off.

While South Sudan is number 157 in the ranking of GDP of 196 countries (World Bank 2007), the total population of South Sudan represents 0.04 % of the world population but shares only 0.02 % of the total GNP of the world whereas the average per capita income of South Sudan is US\$322.2, as compared to the world average of US\$17,535 (SSDP 2011-2013). From the human development indicators perspective, South Sudan is still the second worst country after Somalia in Sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large although some progress in education, healthcare and gender equality has been witnessed (with the considerable help of UN agencies and NGOs) in the last few years (World Bank 2022). The South Sudan ranking for the Human Development Index (HDI), Human Poverty Index (HPI), Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) are low as a whole. Figure 1.1 below shows South Sudan's 2019 HDI of 0.433 which is below the average of 0.513 for countries in the low human development group and below the average of 0.547 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. From Sub-Saharan Africa, South Sudan is compared with Benin and Lesotho, which have HDIs ranked 158 and 165, respectively.

**Figure 1.1 South Sudan's HDI and component indicators for 2019 relative to selected countries**

	HDI value	HDI rank	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2017 PPP US\$)
<b>South Sudan</b>	0.433	185	57.9	5.3	4.8	2,003
<b>Benin</b>	0.545	158	61.8	12.6	3.8	3,254
<b>Lesotho</b>	0.527	165	54.3	11.3	6.5	3,151
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	0.547	—	61.5	10.1	5.8	3,686
<b>Low HDI</b>	0.513	—	61.4	9.4	4.9	2,745

Source: UNDP's Human Development Report 2020

The major impediment in the human resource development of South Sudan remains the existence of disparities (inequalities) in access to the quality education and relevant training and development. Human resource development may be identified as the process through which a

society augments the skills, education, and productive abilities of its people. In essence, it means increases in human capital (Dhammika 2020; Afza & Nazir 2007). Human capital is accumulated and improved upon in several ways: through programs of education and formal training, training on the job, and through individual initiative. It is generally agreed that this process, if carefully designed and implemented, promotes economic growth in any country, whether developing or already industrialized nation (Matei & Ceche 2018). There is a huge gap and mismatch between available skills and existing education and training (UNDP 2015). The basic education has been more relevant to local development and labor market needs since the devolution of powers (through the local government act) to the grassroots level in 2009. The basic education includes the work orientation elements to meet the needs of young people to work in the industry whereas the contributions by the communities and parents remain low (AfDB 2017), although basic education and training is the sole responsibility of the local government units, Ministry of General Education and Instructions and the Ministry of Higher Education (Gichuhi 2015).

## **2. Development Planning and the Human Resources Development in South Sudan**

Through the South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP 2011-2013), a national plan that sets out a medium-term agenda for development, the Republic of South Sudan has developed a system of development planning since becoming an autonomous region in 2005 and subsequently since becoming an independent state in 2011 with oil revenues and foreign aid assistance providing the means to improve the country's economic and social conditions (UNDP 2020; World Bank 2011). Drafted under the theme of *'Realising Freedom, Equality, Justice, Peace and Prosperity for All'*, the SSDP builds upon various existing sector plans and the 2010 Action Plan to address core government functions. It represents a comprehensive framework of goals, objectives and performance targets, action plans to pursue them, and the related allocation of resources (UNDP 2020). Expansion of oil and non-oil revenues coupled with foreign aid assistance during the tumultuous interim period (2005-2011), post-independence and transitional periods (2012-2022) generated even more opportunities to invest in attempts to achieve greater economic progress. Investment in non-oil revenues was prioritized in order to help diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil and foreign aid (AfDB 2017; ACET 2016; UNDP 2015).

Despite the conflicts which resurfaced in the period between 2013 and 2016 and which forced South Sudan's 11.6 million inhabitants to live below the poverty line (IGC 2013), and forced more than a million people to flee their homes and become IDPs within the country or refugees in neighboring countries (AfDB 2017), major improvements were achieved in the provision of public services, particularly in health, education and social services (UNDP 2020). The basic principles underlying South Sudan's development have been the need to address the key nation-building, state-building and peace-building objectives of a new nation recovering from conflict and wishing to move onto a fast-track development path. Within this context, several broad goals have shaped development plans and these include: (1) diversifying the economy and reducing dependence on oil; (2) developing human resources; (3) raising living standards and improving the quality of life; (4) maintaining economic and social stability; (5) deepening regional integration through active participation in the EAC and other bodies; (6) strengthening the role of private sector in the economy; (7) developing and completing the physical infrastructure; and (8) broadening the linkages between South Sudan and other nations, particularly the United States.

These long-term goals were targeted to produce structured changes in the economy and to have more effective control over the development process (AfDB 2013). Within these plans, the need for manpower development is recognized as essential with the increasing pace of economic development. Most HR practitioners and policymakers would agree that manpower development is a particularly indispensable ‘driver’ for real, sustainable development (Afza & Nazir 2007). As suggested by Saleh et al. (2020), development is fundamentally a human effort. While people are obligated to initiate, direct, benefit from development, and ultimately be responsible for all development activities and tasks, they are also required to invest capital, utilize natural resources, produce and create markets and to undertake commercial enterprise (Ogunleye-Adetona 2010; Afza & Nazir 2007). The human resources development strategy in South Sudan is currently implemented through the following programs: general education, which extends from kindergarten to secondary education, and includes teacher training colleges for males and females; higher education, which encompasses education in both public and private universities; technical education and training in both the public and private sectors; science and technology.

### 3. General and Higher Education

South Sudan’s education system, whether general, higher or technical education<sup>1</sup>, is characterized as a low investment, low capacity, but high demand system (Boboya & Barnaba 2015). The state building and peace building efforts of the national plans put high demand on the education system to expand fast, reduce inequity, and provide appropriate teaching. But public expenditure is one of the world’s lowest for education (Kuyok 2017). The basics of the sector administration and management are rudimentary, which started to develop, along with the rest of the civil service in the country, only after the 2005 Peace Agreement. But capacity building efforts of the government have been interrupted by conflicts in 2013 and 2016. Capacity-building, according to GTZ (2011), is the creation, retention, and utilization of capacity. It is the process by which individuals, organizations, and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems, make effective use of resources, and set and achieve their own goals on a sustainable basis (USAID 2009). The General Education Sector Plan (GESP), titled ‘*Planning for Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion*’, is an effort to contain this stress on the system and to give the sector a direction towards stability based on data, evidence and financing outlays (GESP 2022). The first two years of the GESP were framed as a transitional plan that was expected to rapidly increase enrollment along with building new infrastructure, supplying basic teaching and learning materials, regularizing teacher salary and training teachers to cope with the increased enrollment. The following three years of the GESP were focused on institutionalizing teacher training, school supervision, and expansion of secondary and technical education.

The education system in South Sudan consists of 8,000 primary schools (grades 1-8), 120 secondary schools (grades 9-12) and 5 public universities. Higher education in the country is provided by several institutions, including the University of Juba (1975) in the capital, the

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<sup>1</sup>With regards to ‘technical education’, there is a shortage of both, but more so less technical schools than the country needs. Like in most Sub-Saharan African countries, South Sudan placed too much emphasis on acquiring a university education and not enough on obtaining life-sustaining practical skills in a vocational or technical institution. Vocational and technical education's aims may include furthering liberal education (the general development of human potential) to the narrower specifics of vocational education (the imparting and acquisition of specific skills).

University of Bahr el Ghazal (1991) in Wau, the University of Upper Nile (1991) in Malakal, John Garang University (2007) in Bor, and the University of Rumbek (2010) in Rumbek. While there were about 209 operating technical schools in the country as of 2009, there is only one functional teacher training college in the country to meet the demand for training teachers. These technical schools initially catered for the educational needs of the increasing number of dropouts and those opted for technical training and helping build resilient and self-reliant communities (Kuyok 2017; Kuek et al. 2014). The vocational skills training centers were part of key government interventions where the selected youth from vulnerable households were trained, given kits and supported. As a result, many of them now have a livelihood to depend on and provide for their families' immediate needs.

The fact that South Sudan, ravaged by decades of civil war, has long been deprived of an adequate education system is evident in its literacy rates, which are among the lowest in the world and EAC region (Boboya & Barnaba 2015). Apparently, only 34% of the entire population of South Sudan is literate, compared with 92% in Kenya, 87% in Uganda, 77% in Rwanda<sup>2</sup> and 77% in Tanzania (UNICEF 2021). While the primary school dropout rate hovered around 23%, only 6% of all eligible 13-year-old girls completed primary school education (Gichuhi 2017). Along the line of pronounced gender inequalities that surfaced even in primary school education, it was noted that less than half of all primary school-aged children are in school (51% of boys and 37% of girls), and that South Sudanese girls were twice more likely to pass away during childbirth than complete their primary school education (Vanner et al. 2017). For school-age females, access is even more limited, and many drop out within the first few years because of cultural pressures, such as tendency to marry at a young age. In addition, the educational system is further stressed by a lack of school buildings and teaching materials and the limited number of qualified teachers (UNICEF 2021).

According to Gichuhi (2017), the number of illiterate individuals older than 15 constitutes more than 70% of the population in South Sudan. The challenges are particularly severe for female children. According to the 2010 South Sudan Household Health Survey, the nationwide literacy rate for women remains to be 13.4%. The relative growth in the women's literacy rate is apparently impressive, although it is from a much smaller base. These growth rates in women's literacy have been achieved largely in response to specific financial allocation to the education sector by the South Sudanese government with the support of donor partners. According to UNICEF (2021), less than 1% of girls completed primary education. One in four students is a girl and South Sudan maintains the highest female illiteracy rate in the world (World Bank 2022). In 2020, it was estimated that more than one million of children eligible for primary school were not enrolled, with secondary school enrollment being even lower than 10% among those eligible (UNDP 2020). This is because South Sudanese government expenditure on education is only 10% of GDP (Gichuhi 2017).

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<sup>2</sup>The political saliency of economic has a considerable impact on the running of the nation. Rwandan President Paul Kagame has been lauded for bringing in reforms that have resulted in Rwanda achieving exceptional socio-economic and political advancement, peace, stability, and social harmony. The nation, which has a population of roughly 12.3 million people, 50% of whom are under the age of 20, has one of the world's fastest expanding economies, rising at an annual rate of nearly 8%.

#### **4. Private Sector and Manpower Development in South Sudan**

The private sector currently employs more than 200,000 domestic, regional and foreign workers in the country (IGC 2013). The private sector is almost an entirely inconsequential but crucial player in the South Sudanese labor market. The private sector and manpower development in South Sudan is formulated in the context of South Sudan's overall strategy for private sector development as outlined in its 2011-2013 South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP). As discussed earlier, the objective of SSDP was to improve access to finance for private sector development and increase employment opportunities in South Sudan. The strategy emphasizes the development and regulation of the economy of South Sudan in order to achieve prosperity and facilitation of the private sector. Support for increasing the role of the private sector includes improving the investment climate for private sector development and expanding access to finance in South Sudan to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty. With the aim of optimizing non-oil revenues and stimulating rapid diversification of the economy, the South Sudanese government has vehemently emphasized the need for the development of private sector capacities for provision of basic services in the country. However, such capacities are at an early stage of development in South Sudan.

A small domestic private sector has emerged in South Sudan which comprising a large number of small or even very small businesses and a limited number of rather medium firms. According to a report from the African Development Bank, most of the formal businesses in South Sudan are small and medium-sized enterprises. There are about 50 larger firms involved mainly with banking, telecommunications and manufacture of beverages (AfDB 2015). Medium-sized firms number about 500 and are mainly in construction, hotel and restaurant services and trade-related services. Small firms number about 8,000 and are involved with services similar to that of the medium-sized ones. In addition to these registered businesses, there are more than 10,000 micro-firms (typically individual entrepreneurs) involved in petty trade. Almost all of the larger companies are foreign-owned (mainly by Ethiopians, Eritreans, Somalians or Darfurians), as many South Sudanese still lack the skills and capital to start larger businesses. A Business Registry was created in 2006 and in 2010, 10,746 businesses had been registered in South Sudan.

There has been dramatic growth in the number of SMEs that are registered; by end 2010, 8,984 had obtained certificates of incorporation, up from 471 in 2006. According to SSCSE (2011), the number of registered businesses in the ten state capitals grew from 1,294 at end 2005 to 7,332 at end 2010. Three-quarters of these businesses employed less than three people, and about 90% of these businesses had less than five employees. As figure 2.1 indicates, more than 80% of these businesses are in wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services. There were 89 firms involved in construction, and in infrastructure related services there were 149 registered businesses, two-thirds of which were in information and communications. The Interim Constitution that was adopted in 2005 provided for the development of free enterprise and the protection of property rights. More recently, in the South Sudanese Government Growth Strategy for 2018-2021 and in the subsequent SSDP and still-relevant South Sudan's Vision 2040, the government reiterated its commitment to private-sector led growth (SSP 2011-2013). A 2013 study by the International Finance Corporation, a part of the World Bank Group, identified that 90% of jobs in developing countries are in the private sector (ICG 2013). The International Finance Corporation (2011) ranked South Sudan at 159th out of 183 economies on the ease of

doing business (Figure 2.1). A number of key conclusions emerged from this survey. First, South Sudan's legal and regulatory framework remains incomplete; several important laws such as the Labor Bill and a new Companies Bill have been drafted but not yet enacted. The IFC reports that since 2005, 19 laws guiding business registration, operation and exit have been drafted, nine of which have been enacted by the parliament and with several more submitted to the parliament and are awaiting approval (IFC 2013).

Figure 2.1: Number of Registered Businesses in South Sudan in 2010

Type of business activity	Number	Percentage
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries		
Mining and quarrying	10	0.1
Electricity, gas, steam and airconditioning		
Manufacturing	199	2.7
Water supply, sewerage and waste management	7	0.1
Construction	89	1.2
Wholesale and retail trade	5 116	69.8
Transportation & storage	45	0.6
Accommodation and food services	1 037	14.1
Information and communications	97	1.3
Finance and insurance	52	0.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	46	0.6
Administrative and support services	10	0.1
Education	31	0.4
Health and social services	361	4.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	22	0.3
Other services	211	2.9
Total	7 333	100.0

Source: SSCCSE (2011)

Second, the existing legal system can be confusing. South Sudan operates under three distinct and overlapping legal frameworks: (i) laws passed by the National Assembly in Khartoum; (ii) the Laws of the "New Sudan" – enacted by the SPLM/A before 2005; and (iii) the Laws of Southern Sudan – enacted by the Legislative Assembly of Southern Sudan after 2005. Alongside this, customary law – traditional justice applied by community chiefs and built upon custom and tradition, have been used to resolve many disputes. Third, some of the key institutions that regulate South Sudan's private sector are either absent or overlapping. There is confusion among central, state and county jurisdictions over business licensing, taxes, customs, and land administration. Lack of coordination has meant that entrepreneurs have had to deal with each level of government separately. Fourth, South Sudan's institutional capacity and infrastructure remain underdeveloped. Public authorities lack the qualified staff needed to implement regulations, namely, civil engineers to inspect construction sites, auditors to ensure tax compliance, and specialized legal professionals to handle commercial cases. More than half of all civil servants have not completed primary education (SSCCSE 2011). Without a public credit registry or private credit bureau in South Sudan, creditors cannot obtain reliable information on debtors and without a collateral registry; entrepreneurs have a hard time using their assets as guarantees for loans.

## 5. Analysis of the present status of Human Resources Development in South Sudan

Policymakers, HR practitioners, development organizations, the private sector, civil society and academic community in South Sudan and Sub-Saharan Africa generally agree that manpower development is the cornerstone of the development process (Lynham & Cunningham 2016; Kamoche et al. 2015). Quality of human resources is the most important indicator of the level of development and must receive parallel close attention (Ogunleye-Adetona 2010). Human resources can be argued to be a more realistic, reliable and pervasive indicator of development than any other single factor since it is invariably a necessary condition for all kind of economic growth (Ployhart & Moliterno 2011; Afza & Nazir 2007). The economic growth of a country requires both financial and human resources (Ployhart et al. 2006). Financial resources have not been a major problem for South Sudan. Obtaining a sufficient level of qualified manpower for industrialization and economic growth and under-utilization of already-available skilled labor both within the country and the Diaspora are the major problems that need to be addressed through the development of better educational and training programs, as well as incorporation of the diasporic community into the national development plan.

The crucial significance of manpower development in South Sudan and Sub-Saharan Africa derives from the dilemma that has been created by the combination of a migratory population, manpower shortages and the scarcity of trained labor in the face of huge spending capacity, gigantic security-related programs and projects. It was inevitable; therefore, that South Sudan imported most of the skilled and unskilled manpower needed for the development of various sectors of the economy from its East African neighbors to construct buildings and roads; to run hospitals and utilities; to build industrial plants and administer agriculture projects; and to staff both UN agencies and NGOs operating in the country. This considerable dependency is expected to last a long time. The shortage and poor use of skilled domestic manpower remains of a great concern to many in South Sudan (Buny 2021b; AfDB 2013). It has been emphasized that the Sub-Saharan African countries, both as a group and individually, face a number of very real constraints to prolonged economic growth and the chronic scarcity of human resources, both skilled and unskilled, is regarded as the most important feature of economic development (Okpara & Wynn 2008).

In addition, the quality and standard of native manpower are also key elements of labor force gaps in South Sudan (Buny 2021a; IGC 2013). Until recently, the educational system of South Sudan apparently failed to foster strategic thinking by its products (students in this case). Various academic studies also found that the poor utilization of domestic manpower and weaknesses of vocational training programs for South Sudan citizens were the major causes of the shortage in the labor force within South Sudan (IGC 2013). The problem of quality within the total labor force in South Sudan is not restricted to the domestic labor force. About 40% of the total labor force in South Sudan is foreign, most of which are regional workers from Kenya and Uganda with a handful of international expatriates. According to World Bank (2022), the proportion of domestic labor force within the total labor force number in South Sudan declined from around 50% in 2014 to 30% in 2018. Nonetheless, it is predicted that the size of the foreign labor force in South Sudan will increase and dependence on it will continue well into the future.

In terms of labor force and percentage of domestic labor force in South Sudan, the distribution of the total labor force by occupation, especially for professional and technical workers is comparatively low, although there was a small growth in the NGOs sector from 2005-2019 (UNDP 2020). The share of workers in less skilled occupation groups (such as production, construction, transportation and service), conversely, is more than 50% of total employed in 2020. This begs a question: where are the South Sudanese indigenous personnel located in this distribution? Foreign or regional worker are generally contracted in either technical or managerial occupations while local personnel are employed in the lowest skilled, manual occupations or in the service occupations outside of the production process, or as clerical workers (AfDB 2015). In an attempt to boost employment occupations, the South Sudanese government and development partners are now directing massive financial input into the development of educational systems in the country. A study covering the period between 2011 to 2019 found that the enrolment in primary education in South Sudan increased by 7.5% over the period of the study, an increase of 4.3%; that of secondary school by 9.9%; of that for higher education level by 94%. Overall, the three levels of education involvement grew from 30.98% in 2011 to 40.65% in 2017, an increase of 9.67%. In spite of all this, South Sudan currently has the lowest annual growth rates of education enrollment in the world (Agoot 2017). Some argue, however, that despite the lowest annual growth rate, the people of South Sudan apparently benefited from their education system and that the quality of their education has substantially improved (Kuek et al. 2014). It can also be argued that the education systems in South Sudan is failing to provide personnel even to fill the gaps in some key professions since most local students are oriented towards higher education in general and to the humanities in particular.

The World Bank, UNICEF and other African scholars have also concerned about the education systems in South Sudan. In their studies, they criticized the education system in general and higher education in particular. They argued that the system lacked quality and that there was a need to find new field of specialization to harmonize with the future needs of development plans in South Sudan (UNICEF 2021; Kuyok 2017; World Bank 2011). The education system in South Sudan is viewed by many educational experts as not responsive enough to real market needs. In addition to a lack of technical and practice (science-oriented education), there is also the problem of disproportionality, a dominance of general education over technical education (Buny 2020). The number of students enrolled in technical and vocational schools is still small, despite financial incentives and the provision of modern equipment and new tools that have been channeled to the sector by the government and development partners. In 2018, the percentage of students in technical and vocal schools in South Sudan was about 1% of the total number of students in all types of schools (World Bank 2017). This is very low compared with some of the African countries where it sometimes reaches 15-20%. At the university level, picture is very much the same. The total supply of university graduates in South Sudan does not match the demands of industrial development needs. There is a surplus of university students studying humanities<sup>3</sup> and social science subjects, but a corresponding shortage of students studying other

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<sup>3</sup>Humanities are academic disciplines that study aspects of 'human society and culture'. In the Renaissance, the term contrasted with divinity and referred to what is now called classics, the main area of secular study in universities at the time. Today, the humanities are more frequently defined as any fields of study outside of professional training, mathematics, and the natural and social sciences. The humanities include the study of ancient and modern language, literature, philosophy, history, archaeology, anthropology, human geography, law, religion, and art.

highly specialized technical subjects. Such an imbalance is an inevitable outcome since the secondary education is the best on which higher education rests.

In addition, the role of women in the economic activities within South Sudan is still limited. Although female education has seen a marked expansion and has considerably improved in terms of enrollments in secondary and university levels, their contribution to South Sudan economic development is still quite small. It has been argued in South Sudan for some time that university programs for females are still in their preliminary stage and are not sufficiently developed, either qualitatively or quantitatively to cope with the increased flow of secondary level graduates (Buny 2020). Many experts argue that comprehensive planning for the development of South Sudan human resources requires that this key issue should receive immediate attention (World Bank 2007). Some African academic scholars believe that the most important reason why female contribution to economic activity is comparatively small is that women may be given the opportunity for education, but the opportunity to work is controlled by cultural and social restrictions. They believe that women in South Sudan, as well as in other African societies in general have reached a stage of contradiction. Previously, they were not educated or aware of the world around them; now they have been given some education, but are devoid of content and application. In South Sudan, as well as in many other African countries, there are many avenues of 'work-open' to women and they can be trained and qualify in most productive fields that are not in contradiction with customary laws and traditional values. In these roles at least they can participate effectively in the building and development of their societies.

## 6. 2015 UNDP South Sudan Human Development Report

The 2015 UNDP report on Human Development was the first to be written for South Sudan as an independent country. Written under the theme "*People, Peace and Prosperity*", the report reflects what South Sudanese, as a people, aspired to. The report asks South Sudanese leaders to take the long term view in their thoughts and actions, in delivering basic services to their people, and in stabilizing economic situation in the country. That is the very essence of human development – enlarging people's choices – so that they can live better and fulfilling lives, work together to define the South Sudan's Vision 2040, while simultaneously joining the rest of the African continent to define the Agenda 2063<sup>4</sup> and the rest of the world to define the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. A 2015 UNDP South Sudan Human Development report substantiates and develops some of the more important policy issues that we have explored. It indicates that up to end of 2015, a total of 188 countries have publishable national human development reports and statistics in an attempt to measure development achievements from a human perspective. In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, 48 countries have published their HDI<sup>5</sup>, GDI<sup>6</sup>, GII and the MPI (World Bank 2020; Zarestky & Collins 2017; Lynham & Cunningham 2016). The HDI is published to steer discussions about development progress away from GDP towards a measure

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4Africa's Agenda 2063 is an African Union's objective of eradicating poverty, improving quality education and innovation and industrialization in African continent

5The HDI is an average measure of basic human development achievements in a country. Like all averages, the HDI masks inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the country level.

6The GDI is defined as a ratio of the female to the male. The GDI measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and command over economic resources.

that genuinely “counts” for people’s lives. Introduced by the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) thirty years ago to provide a simple measure of human progress – built around people’s freedoms to live the lives they want to - the HDI has gained popularity with its simple yet comprehensive formula that assesses a population’s average longevity, education, and income.

Over the years, however, there has been a growing interest in providing a more comprehensive set of measurements that capture other critical dimensions of human development. The ‘loss’ in human development due to inequality is given by the difference between the HDI and the IHDI, and can be expressed as a percentage. As the inequality in a country increases, the loss in human development also increases (Agrawal & Khan 2020). The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. A long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy while Knowledge level is measured by mean years of schooling among the adult population (Saleh et al. 2020). Standard of living is measured by GNI per capita expressed in constant international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rates (Widaarni & Bawono 2021). South Sudan’s HDI value for 2019 is 0.433—which put the country in the low human development category—positioning it at 185 out of 189 countries and territories. The rank is shared with Burundi. Between 2010 and 2019, South Sudan’s HDI value increased from 0.410 to 0.433, an increase of 5.6%. Figure 2.2 shows South Sudan’s progress in each of the HDI indicators. Between 1990 and 2019, South Sudan’s life expectancy at birth increased by 14.3 years, mean years of schooling decreased by 0.0 years and expected years of schooling increased by 0.4 years. As shown in figure 2.2 below, South Sudan’s GNI per capita increased by about 12.9% between 2010 and 2019.

Figure 2.2 South Sudan’s HDI trends based on consistent time series data

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2017 PPP\$)	HDI value
1990	43.5				
1995	46.9				
2000	49.2				
2005	51.7				
2010	54.8	4.9	4.8	1,775	0.410
2015	56.9	5.3	4.8	1,818	0.425
2016	57.1	5.3	4.8	1,632	0.421
2017	57.4	5.3	4.8	1,806	0.426
2018	57.6	5.3	4.8	1,856	0.429
2019	57.9	5.3	4.8	2,003	0.433

Source: UNDP’s Human Development Report 2020

We also present the coefficient of human inequality as a direct measure of inequality which is an unweighted average of inequalities in three dimensions. The HDI is calculated for 152 countries. South Sudan’s HDI for 2019 is 0.433. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.276, a loss of 36.3% due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices. Benin and Lesotho show losses due to inequality of 37.1% and 27.5%, respectively. The average loss due to inequality for low HDI countries is 31.4% and for Sub-Saharan Africa it is 30.5%. As depicted in figure 2.3 below, the human inequality coefficient for South Sudan is equal to 36.0%. The 2019 female HDI value for South Sudan is 0.384 in contrast with 0.456 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.842, placing it into group 5.2 in terms of mean years of schooling. As shown in figure 2.4 below, in comparison, GDI values for Benin and Lesotho are 0.855 and 1.014, respectively.

Figure 2.3 South Sudan's HDI for 2019 relative to selected countries and groups

	IHDI value	Overall loss (%)	Human inequality coefficient (%)	Inequality in life expectancy at birth (%)	Inequality in education (%)	Inequality in income (%)
South Sudan	0.276	36.3	36.0	36.2	39.6	32.3
Benin	0.343	37.1	36.9	34.9	43.7	32.0
Lesotho	0.382	27.5	27.4	33.1	19.6	29.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.380	30.5	30.5	29.7	34.1	27.6
Low HDI	0.352	31.4	31.3	30.8	37.9	25.1

Source: UNDP's Human Development Report 2020

Figure 2.4 South Sudan's GDI for 2019 relative to selected countries and groups

	F-M ratio	HDI values		Life expectancy at birth		Expected years of schooling		Mean years of schooling		GNI per capita	
	GDI value	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
South Sudan	0.842	0.384	0.456	59.4	56.4	3.5	5.9	3.9	5.2	1,759	2,247
Benin	0.855	0.502	0.587	63.3	60.2	11.4	13.8	2.4	5.5	2,837	3,673
Lesotho	1.014	0.529	0.522	57.6	51.2	11.7	10.9	7.2	5.8	2,471	3,849
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.894	0.516	0.577	63.3	59.8	9.5	10.6	4.9	6.7	2,937	4,434
Low HDI	0.861	0.474	0.551	63.0	59.9	8.7	10.1	3.9	6.0	2,043	3,446

Source: UNDP's Human Development Report 2020

Back to 2015 UNDP report, the report indicates that South Sudan has the initiative to prepare its first national human development report. This is welcome since it shows the commitment of the country to improve the well-being of its people. Despite clear and detailed data on human resources development in South Sudan, the UNDP report suggests that remarkable progress has been made in South Sudan during the past 17 years of South Sudan's independence and that this has somewhat transformed the lives of its citizens. However, this dramatic transformation has not reached education and health services sectors and life expectancy has not yet improved either. South Sudan, for example, is one of the countries in the world where underdevelopment pervaded all sectors with life expectancy standing at 58, just right after Somalia which has a life expectancy of 57 (Maweje & McSharry 2021). However, the UNDP report suggests that the South Sudan manpower system is currently facing several problems such as growing unemployment, inefficiency in wage distribution, inefficient managerial and professional personnel and inappropriate labor laws (UNDP 2015). As much as 85% of the working population is engaged in non-wage work, mainly in subsistence agriculture and livestock (AfDB 2017). Labour force participation in South Sudan declined to 33% in 2016 from 50% in 2015, lifting the unemployment rate to 11% in 2016 from 9% in 2015. The low adult literacy rate (averaging 32% in the period 2010 to 2015 compared to an average of 67% across Africa), as well as low levels of school enrolment, undermine the quality of personnel available in the labour market supply, undermining South Sudan's economic prospects in the medium to long term. This situation reflects the lack of employment policies and opportunities in the country. The slowdown in economic activity, including the decline in foreign direct investment, completely hampered the growth of an economy in South Sudan (Kuek et al. 2014).

Until 2013, the South Sudanese government was able to maintain stable economy with good number of citizens working in the public and private sectors. However, the number of young people in the 15-24 age group now greatly exceeds the number of jobs being carried out by South Sudanese aged 25-35. This, to some extent, suggests that in the next few years there is

going to be huge unemployment. Although, there are no official joblessness figures, it is reckoned that about 45% of all South Sudanese males are unemployed and that among those aged between 20 and 30 the rate rises as high as 51%. A major problem facing the labor market in South Sudan is limited availability of job opportunities. Few job opportunities available in the government departments, MNCs and NGOs are not compatible with the available number of job-hunters. Despite 17 years of sovereignty, more than 75% of university graduates in South Sudan are in social sciences<sup>7</sup> rather than needed technology, vocational and technical skills (ILOSTAT 2019). The UNDP report concludes that the existing manpower system in South Sudan still needs to be a lot more effective. With this in mind, the report shows that like most African countries, South Sudan continues to maintain comparatively good growth and the emergent human resources strategy promises future growth. Another encouraging human resources development is the continual ‘localization’ of the labor force, especially in financial services, petroleum and NGOs sectors. Already, the Petroleum Act (2012) and the NGOs Bill (2016) required NGOs and multinational oil companies operating in South Sudan to employ local workers and engage in local human capital’s development (UNDP 2020). This move, together with the huge investment in the development of human resources that has taken place since the time of the signing of A-ARCSS in 2018, is expected to yield positive results for the new Millenniums.

## 7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In conclusion, although South Sudan has accomplished various objectives on the road to better human resources development, there has generally been no considerable development progress made in the past 17 years in the country in terms of physical infrastructure, technological advancement, rise in the number of higher education institutions and training and research centres. With this, we can conclude that the current human resources development in South Sudan, however, is typical of most Third World countries. The country faces many deficiencies and gaps that restrict the full achievement of human resources and economic development objectives. One of the main problems is the shortage of trained manpower and a lack of planning for the best possible utilization of already-available human resources both within the country and in the diaspora. We hope this research will serve as a starting place for guiding future studies on human resources and economic development in South Sudan, which continues to change and develop as circumstances evolve in the country.

South Sudan, being a ‘latecomer’ in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in the global community seems to be under threat of economic and political instability and great pressure to catch up in terms of human resources and economic development. South Sudan at independence in 2011 was better off than Sudan at independence in 1956 in terms of human capital and infrastructure (Buny 2017). When Sudan gained its independence in 1956 from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the joint British and Egyptian government that administrated Sudan, it lacked the basic

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<sup>7</sup>Social science is the branch of science devoted to the study of societies and the relationships among individuals within those societies. The term was formerly used to refer to the field sociology, the original “science of society”, established in the 19th century. In addition to sociology, it now encompasses a wide array of academic disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, economics, human geography, linguistics, management science, political science, psychology, and history.

infrastructure, educated and skilled workers, and a stable investment climate. That is to say, when Sudan was granted formal system of self-governance in 1956, there were essentially no good roads or electricity, educational infrastructure and health facilities established compared to South Sudan in 2011, yet the country was running well. In addition, Sudan's inherited economy from the colonial era consisted primarily of agricultural exports, particularly cotton. But after independence in 1956 that went into a long decline in the face of man-made fibres and a lack of success in developing of alternative crops – with the partial exception of sugar (Zambakari 2015). Other problems inherited by Sudan from the colonial powers were the status of the civil service. The government placed Sudanese in the administration and provided compensation and pensions for British officers of the Sudan Political Service who left the country and retained those who could not be replaced, mostly technicians and teachers. Despite these impediments, the Sudanese government achieved both political and economic transformation quickly and with a minimum of turbulence, although southerners resented the replacement of British administrators in the south with northern Sudanese. Though with enormous challenges, the Sudan government under the leadership of Sovereignty Council of Sudan and subsequently President Ibrahim Abboud from 1958 to 1964 worked hard to run a thriving economy by cleaning up corruption, reviving small-scale agriculture in the country, improving health and education services, and attracting investment for productive jobs for underemployed and educated young people (Sabna & Abbass 2022).

Unlike Sudan in 1956, the situation was quite propitious for South Sudan at independence in 2011. According to UNESCO (2015) and South Sudan Household and Workforce Survey (2012), South Sudan at independence in 2011 had 30% of educated labor force with a GDP per capita of US \$1,858, which was much higher than that of Sudan at independence in 1956 and South Sudan's East African neighbours at their independences in 1960s. Very little of this wealth, however, trickles down to the average citizen. A study conducted by Kuek et al. (2014), for example, found that more than half of the population lives below the poverty line, defined as those living on \$1.25 per day or less. However, at independence in 1956, the adult literacy rate in Sudan was 22.9% while education accounted for only 15.5% of the Sudanese budget to support 1,778 primary schools with enrolment of 208,688, 108 intermediate schools with enrolment of 14,632, and 49 government secondary schools with enrolment of 5,423. Higher education was limited to the University of Khartoum, except for less than 1,000 students sent abroad, mainly UK, by wealthy parents or on government scholarships (Sabna & Abbass 2022).

Herein lies the following related fundamental questions: (i) What went wrong in South Sudan? (ii) Why South Sudan has not been having effective and functioning political, economic and administrative systems despite having had a stable economy, adequate human capital and higher literacy rate than Sudan at independence? To answer these questions, first, one has to examine the nature of the Sudanese government back then and South Sudanese government of today, as well as the behavior of bureaucrats and politicians in the government back then and the ones in the government today. The government of that time's focus was on the welfare of the citizens. As a result, one could tell that Sudanese at that time were nationalists compared to Sudanese of today. For [South] Sudanese of today, what matters the most is self-interest and self-enrichment, not nationalism or patriotism. The absence of nationalism could easily be discerned today in this grant corruption which has pervaded all sectors in the country. The South Sudanese government lacks fiscal discipline and transparency in managing public finances and has low capacity to

manage South Sudan's convoluted and oil-dependent budget resulting in large-scale corruption and insufficient fiscal transparency. Despite efforts to combat corruption, reduce conflict and improve respect for human rights in South Sudan, the country is far from these goals. The issue of corruption, diversion of resources, siphoning off of the nation's wealth by individuals that are answerable to the government remains a serious stain on the government of South Sudan. While corruption is not unique to South Sudan, the country suffers more from the unwillingness of its top leadership to hold people accountable for their destructive behavior toward the country. Infrastructure projects are contracted without proper and transparent procurement and bidding procedures, and above all, not follow up to ensure completion, quality and value to the nation. No accountability or punishment of any sort has ever happened, even in cases obvious, such as Juba-Bhar El Gazal Road, the supply of vehicles to the government, the telecom projects and the "Dura Saga", in which the government paid several billion dollars to unsympathetic domestic contractors to supply food to the army and state governments ahead of a projected famine in 2008, but the food was never delivered. These are some of the reasons why South Sudan has been at the bottom of all international indexes as reported by Transparency International in its 2021 report. South Sudan is now said to be the most corrupt country in the world, according to Corruption Perception Index (CPI) (2022), the most hungriest country on earth (Jok 2011), and the most violent place to travel or live worldwide (De Waal 2014).

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including the CPI and public financial records, we found that corruption continues to be widespread in South Sudan, presumably due to the inefficacy of the country's accountability and transparency measures. This, at the moment, exhibits that South Sudan, as a nation, is a victim of parochial politics and politics of greed as we see today. It suggests that South Sudan's governance failures have become a key driver of national and subnational violence and, as such, sustained reform, transparency, and accountability is critical to resolving the root causes of conflict. It also suggests that the government needs to continue to invest in activities and programs that save lives and livelihoods and protect social fabric, not those which create and perpetuate human suffering in the country. It still further demonstrates that in absence of nationalism and willingness from the country's top leadership to change and introduce reforms and genuinely fight corruption, it is difficult to address the problems confronting South Sudan. Even the regional government of Abel Alier's<sup>8</sup> success was attributed to nationalism because the people running it were nationalists whose goal was on calling all South Sudanese to become nationalistic and place the interest of the country and its people at the forefront. The leaders of that time were inspired by the historical liberation of the people of Southern Sudan and their determination to build a better country based on the pillars of the liberal ideals of freedom, equality, justice, and respect for human rights. They were guided by the vision of a sovereign Southern Sudan that aspires to address its political, social, and economic issues through consensus building. Abel Alier's regional government succeeded because it had made peace, love and unity a priority and avenue for restoring macroeconomic stability and citizens' welfare in the region. To this end, unity, love and the spirit of sharing little resources became the essential features for the people and government in Southern Sudan, as well as the basis for national development (Buny 2010). Simultaneously, it succeeded because it

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<sup>8</sup>Abel Alier, an internationally respected judge, human-rights lawyer and activist on behalf of Christians in South Sudan, was Vice-President of Sudan (1971-1981) and the first President of the High Executive Council of Southern Sudan's Autonomous Region (1972-1978) until the central government dissolved that body in 1983.

had established a unified, regionally balanced, and ethnically representative, professional national army and organized forces, an aspect that is lacking in SPLM led government of today. The spirit of nationalism in the regional governments of 1971-1981 and 1972-1978 could be seen in how they built government offices out of \$3 million budget which was coming annually from Khartoum. This is in addition to other projects that could boost the economy in the country such as the Aweil Rice Scheme and Nzara Agricultural Scheme as well as the Malut and Mongalla sugar factories. The lack of financial backing from Khartoum halted the implementation of the projects. Moreover, during the first half of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement (1972-1980), Liberation Movement Era (1983-2004), as well as the Interim Period of the CPA (2005-2011), the South Sudanese were able to do what then appeared to be a rare display of unity for the better development of the nation. Although they later spent the remaining part of the period undoing what they had harmoniously put together, they achieved much including the attainment of a statehood of their own.

In relation to behavior of government officials and how their behaviors affect human resources and economic development, Bates and Devarajan (2000) argued that the observed poor economic performance of a number of African countries cannot be explained without taking into account the behavior of government bureaucrats and politicians. Politicians and bureaucrats around President Kiir have, for the past 17 years, held the state captive in pursuit of their own personal and business interests, and in advancing their own political agenda at the expense of populace. This has brought about the failure of state in the delivery of basic services to the ordinary South Sudanese citizens in Juba and at the periphery. Periodical postponement of elections through wars and shrinking of civic space are some of the ways which have been used to hold the state captive, for as long as the elites are benefiting. These tactics of wars and civic space scared civil population away from holding government accountable, whether for service delivery or corruption. A relevant analytical framework in the context of which such account can be taken, is the neo-classical political economy that starts from assuming that government officials—whether bureaucrats or politicians—have well defined preferences over policy choices. Such preferences get aggregated through interest groups and political parties. On the basis of such preferences policy outcomes get determined through the intermediation of domestic political institutions (Collier 1999). Examples of how politics can be incorporated in an analysis that seeks to explain policy outcomes in South Sudan are given for trade policy, exchange rate policy, the budget process and monetary policy (Mawejje & McSharry 2021). Since all of these policy variables affect economic development it is concluded that politics, and more broadly the behaviors of government officials, both elected and non-elected, affects human resources and economic development through its impact on public policy.

From the findings, it is clear that another reason why South Sudan is not prospering politically, economically and administratively, as well as in terms of human capital is the impact of war. A major feature of post-independence South Sudan was the civil war that raged for several years from 2011-2013 at relatively low intensity and from 2016 to the present at relatively high intensity. A recent study of the economics of civil war in South Sudan is that of Mawejje and McSharry (2021), which provides historical as well as analytical insights on this war. Given its long duration it is believed that the civil war must have affected the performance of the economy. Civil wars usually cause immediate and substantial decline of output, and when they last long enough time they can also destroy the physical, human and “social” capital of the

affected country. The loss of productive capital, especially human and social capital, takes more time to reverse. Collier (1999) distinguishes among five effects of conflict. Military destruction reduces the capital stock. The government diverts its expenditure from economic services, such as the police, to military expenditure. Disruption raises the cost of transactions and lowers the cost of opportunistic behavior so that social capital starts to break down. Because incomes are seen as temporarily low and investment opportunities are unusually poor and risky, agents will shift their portfolios abroad. These five effects have implications for both the level and the composition of economic activity. During civil wars per capita GDP is estimated to decline at annual rate of 2.2% relative to the counterfactual of no war. Moreover, the sectors that are intensive in, or suppliers of capital and transaction (e.g., manufacturing, construction, transport, distribution, finance) tend to suffer more disproportionate losses (Collier 1999). So civil wars not only reduce the overall level of economic activity, but they are particularly damaging to the most dynamic sectors of the affected economy. Therefore, analysing the economic consequences and causes of civil war is central to understanding the economic and human development process in South Sudan. This country has endured one of the longest human conflicts (1955–1972 and 1983–2005), and more recently one of the bloodiest wars in Africa (2013-2018). De Wall (2014) provides some simple simulations of the possible costs incurred by South Sudan due to just two of the channels noted above: (a) the intensity of the war, which is assumed to lead to political instability, erosion of the state and civil society instruments, and the consequent decline in property rights and the enforcement of contracts; and (b) the diversion of the limited human, financial and physical resources to military ends. The first effect is proxied by the number of war casualties per 1,000, while the ratio of military expenditure to GDP was the chosen indicator for the second effect.

A recent UN and ICG reports about food insecurity, child malnutrition and unprecedented levels of poverty in South Sudan also put the statistics of the economic cost of war in South Sudan to \$15 billion in the form of actual cost of financing the fighting, destruction of assets, missed productive opportunities and the cost of importing everything we consume, from food to clothes, medicines, school and construction materials (Buny 2020; ICG 2013). This is to say, 98% of everything we consumed is imported, making Kenya and Uganda the biggest beneficiaries of South Sudan's demise. If you look at this with the 'lens' of oil revenue and the country's GDP, \$900-1 billion a year, you will quickly discover that the biggest problem facing South Sudan to date is economic cost of war, mismanagement, corruption and waste of public resources. In addition, the country is now unable to feed its citizens not because it can't, but mainly because the ruling elites steal too much from the people and failed to invest in human capital which would have allowed an economy to grow, and that in our view, should be the story everyday in South Sudan. When human capital increases in areas such as science, education and management, it leads to increase in innovation, social well-being, equality, increased productivity, improved rates of participation, and ultimately contributed to human resources and economic development (Widaarni & Bawono 2021; Agrawal & Khan 2020).

Nonetheless, in order to address these rapidly changing factors discussed above, this research argues South Sudan to respond to these challenges with integrated and concerted efforts. First, with the aim of diversifying and expanding the economy, and building a more broadly-based, stronger, efficient and competitive private sector for the future, the South Sudanese government needs to strongly emphasize the role of the private sector. In support of this initiative, a broad set

of policies have to be established that provide more incentives to the producing sectors of industry, agriculture and mining in particular. Government also needs to attempt to create a more favorable environment for private sector investment and growth through ensuring a gradually increasing level of expenditure within its national development plans. The importance of the private sector's role in the economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Sudan has recently begun to take a new direction (ECA 2017). In response to emerging economic difficulties and changes in oil revenues, the private sector will be required to assume a greater leading role in future economic development. In the past, the initial leadership in economic development was provided by government (Mamman et al. 2012); however, currently the primary role of the private sector has shifted to management of profitable enterprises (DeGhetto et al. 2016). The South Sudan Development Plan (2011-2103), however, placed greater responsibilities on the private sector and identified five important contributions from it: (1) to raise the overall level of efficiency in the economy by making more efficient use of scarce resources and improving productivity; (2) to replace non-South Sudanese manpower by South Sudanese, especially in the NGOs and Oil sectors, and create new job opportunities for citizens; (3) to diversify the economy base and reduce the dependence on oil by entering into new fields of investment directed towards domestic and world markets; (4) to reduce the financial burden of government through participating in financing development projects; (5) and to raise labor productivity by participating effectively in upgrading technical and administrative skills through training (UNDP 2015). With these objectives in mind, the field of human resources has to be developed correspondingly. The South Sudan educational system needs to provide the economy with an adequate base of trained professionals in order for it to become competitive globally. The educational system in South Sudan has, until recently, failed to foster strategic thinking. It has relied on 'rote learning' valuing general business and administrative skills over technical skills, science and mathematics. This has often discouraged creativity and new ideas. The transition to the private sector requires human resources policies that emphasize productivity, increase skills formation and workplace flexibility. This transition invariably implies fundamental changes in national policies (Mamman & Bakuwa 2012).

Second, South Sudan needs to consciously and continually recalibrate its relationship with the West, particularly United States, and engage itself in borrowing of economic development ideas from other countries in the region and beyond. However, in order to maintain a balanced or symmetrical or in any way predictable diplomatic relations with the US, the South Sudanese government needs to address the issues of differences with the US administration. The slow implementation of the peace agreement, especially the security arrangements part of it, the necessary steps towards elections, the review and making of the permanent constitution, conduct of census and corruption in the oil industry, all have become a serious disappointment to the United States (Mayai 2015; Jok 2011). Corruption in the oil sector has killed South Sudan economically, especially the matter of so-called oil pre-sales, the fact that oil is sold ahead of production, with unscrupulous individuals harvesting the proceed and no contribution to the nation. Recycling of corrupt individuals in the South Sudanese government and unwillingness by the government officials to change and address problems confronting the nation are other parts of the bone of contentions that the US government picked up and does not like about South Sudanese leaders. To improve relationship with the US, South Sudan will need to start with minor reforms from within its system and then sell these reforms to the Americans. For example, genuinely fight corruption, including allowing the Auditor General to publish the audits, expand

civil liberties, press freedoms, equitably enforce the rule of law, attack nepotism and ensure meritocracy as the basis for employment in the country. Such minor reforms, if proven to be genuine, could cut South Sudan a bit of mileage with the Americans.

Third, in this increasingly and interdependent world economy, the makings of a replicable model through a process of institutional borrowing and creative adaptation will be the key weapons of South Sudan. In many of history's most successful economic reforms, clever countries have learned from the policy successes of others, adapting them to local conditions (Kamoche et al. 2014). In the long history of economic development, 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain learned from Holland; early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Prussia learned from Britain and France; mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Meiji Japan learned from Germany; post-second world war Europe learned from the United States; 19<sup>th</sup> century Singapore learned from the United States and Great Britain; and Deng Xiaoping's China learned from Japan (Modisane 2018; Ployhart & Moliterno 2011). Through a process of institutional borrowing and creative adaptation, successful economic institutions and cutting-edge technologies spread around the world, and thereby boost global economic progress (Okpara & Wynn 2008; Ployhart et al. 2006). Today, too, there are some great opportunities for this kind of "policy arbitrage", if South Sudan would only take the time to learn from other countries' successes. Of course, back in the real world, South Sudan, like most other emerging countries, will not achieve such bliss anytime soon. But, by opening our eyes to policy successes abroad, we would surely speed the path to national improvement in South Sudan. Empirical studies conducted by Horwitz et al. (2010) Kamoche (2004) argued that African countries need to vigorously replicate human resources and economic development policies adopted by Western economies, with the intention to mould them and uniquely adapt them into their local contexts and cultures. Their findings concluded that while suitable African management theories and models can only be developed by African practitioners, or at least in close collaboration with western suppliers of technology, there is a need for African organizations and institutions to imitate ideas, processes, and philosophies from American-Europe public and private institutions and bringing them to our own public and private institutions. All these research findings we compiled should be our country's treasure. The four developed East Asian economies, also known as the "Asian Tigers" (e.g., Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), are a force to reckon with simply because they stole ideas around the globe and turned them into their own. Their findings end up by giving out the conduit for change, with learnings from Silicon Valley and its transition to where it is today being provided as practical example of how what seemed like adversity was transformed into something that has become a major driver of the U.S economy and indeed the world, as virtually all the products designed and produced by companies in this area are used globally. For this to happen in South Sudan, the government needs to create an environment of possibility that fosters camaraderie, rewards innovative ideas, that is, accomplishment through efforts and not effortless accomplishment and encourages resilience. A right blending and friendly relationship of economics, intelligentsia and politics is posited to be the ideal model for South Sudan.

Fourth, government's investments in country's quality education system are critical in dealing with the development and human resources challenges of South Sudan. Investing in quality education and training in the wake of skilled-based society is one mechanism for increasing human capital and economic growth in South Sudan. Quality education influences development through changes in the system of social stratification as well as through the expansion of

knowledge (Afza & Nazir 2007). Quality educational development, in the view of Agrawal and Khan (2020), is the key to the success of increasing human capital and technological development because it plays a role in improving the quality of human resources. Increasing human resources here is in the form of increased knowledge, mastery of technology, innovation, and the ability to develop and encourage technology development. To realize this, South Sudan's leaders will need to focus on investing heavily in the infrastructure as well as education and training to benefit the country through skilled workers and higher level jobs such as engineers and doctors. The policy, if generally successful, will help develop the country into more advanced and high-income industrialized developed nation. Moreover, to promote the human resources and economic development, employment creation and development of social sector and integrated set of labor market policies are needed (Saleh et al. 2020). This is in line with the findings of Widarni and Bawono (2021) which suggested that integrated labor market policies, acquisition of relevant knowledge and demand-based skills are the main requirements of sustainable growth, competitiveness and human resources and economic development worldwide. Although the promotion of quality education and training has been a part of ongoing efforts of South Sudan, however, this slow progress needs a focused and object-oriented approach to achieve desired results to become a skilled-based society. It is imperative to create favorable conditions for a knowledge-based economy in South Sudan in order to generate long-term economic development. The focus should be on the areas that will support growth of the creative potential and economic competitiveness of the country. For this purpose, while making the strategy, South Sudan should focus on essential structural reforms and creating conditions for the development of a knowledge-based economy. Basic education for all is the key to securing long-term competitiveness of human resources in South Sudan. The level and type of education must be relevant, provide general skills to the people and must be demand-driven with respect to the market needs and requirements. Moreover, familiarity with the use of information technologies is one of the best means of transforming the nation into a dynamic knowledge-based economy (Saleh et al. 2020; DeGhetto et al. 2016). High information technology literacy must be insured in all the age and social groups and internet access must be expanded to grab the benefits of global libraries. Introduction of IT should be in the syllabus of both traditional and modern professional education for all the students and teachers and private firms or MNCs should be encouraged to develop the IT services to general public.

Fifth, South Sudan needs to embark on agricultural industrialization and development. South Sudan could be one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where agricultural sector, as a leading sector, can play an important role in economic development. Supported by extensive land resources, a suitable climate and great genetic diversity of biological resources, more than 90% of South Sudan's land is arable with potential to become the "breadbasket of Africa and the Middle East", a "storehouse or barn for threshed grain of the world", and a "land of tomorrow", but only 4% of the land is cultivated today (AfDB 2017). Though the country's economic development still relies on this sector, its potential has not been maximally managed. This is due to many factors, namely lack of human resource competence, community culture and regulations in terms of natural resource management. Human resources, however, have not played a significant role, meaning that the level of knowledge is still low compared to other countries in the region, especially in the agricultural sector, due to the lack of education from the community regarding modern agricultural technology. Another factor is that the existing culture in the community is still strong, and maintains traditional methods in the agricultural production

process, still using traditional agricultural tools such as the use of human and animal labor in working on agricultural land. There is also a cultural habit of carrying out agricultural activities just for personal fulfilment, rather than for commercial purposes, so that added value is not obtained by the community. There also has not been much use of technological advances in the agricultural production process as a potential resource. Another factor is the lack of existing regulations to help develop national potential, such as regulations for investment activities, which become an obstacle to economic development (ACET 2016). Management of existing natural resources can provide added value to society if existing human resource increase their competence in the management of the agricultural sector by changing their mindset and culture so as to fulfil needs for production economically. By using technology in the production process, productivity can be increased and the added valued increased, which would result in an increase in national economic growth (Kamoche et al. 2004). In addition to increasing economic growth, a strategy is needed to encourage investment in areas such as increasing the competitiveness of local products through increasing local production, and increasing the investor interest with various regulations in the form of easy permits in the management and development of various businesses such as agribusiness and tourism. The South Sudanese government can provide facilities, investment incentives, and new uses of technology to produce superior economic production. We, therefore, emphasized on the need to diversify the country's economy by encouraging local production. This means the country should maximize agricultural production as well as industrial utilization of natural resources in order to reduce high prices of basic commodities in the market. We believe stabilizing the economy requires proper utilization of the country's resources such as gold and boosting production in the agricultural sector. The only way to minimize this and to solve this problem is to encourage local production to produce our own food and when we produce our own food, we will involve in agriculture and explore other vitals sectors like mining. We hope that the South Sudanese government, together with the community of economic actors, can implement our strategy so that the human resources and utilization of modern technologies can grow and develop and contribute to economic development.

Sixth, South Sudan needs to develop a roadmap for effectively and sustainably engaging with the diaspora in development of the nation. Over the past few years, the contributions of Diasporas to sustainable development in their respective origin and destination countries have been acknowledged in the AU 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Frehywot et al. 2019). Beyond their well-known role as senders of remittances, diaspora can also promote trade and foreign direct investment, create businesses and spur entrepreneurship, and transfer new knowledge and skills (Martell 2019). As of 2012, there were about 4 million people of South Sudanese origin or descendants residing abroad outside their homeland, mainly in USA, Canada, UK, New Zealand and Australia, with small communities existing in Israel, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden and Finland (Linden et al. 2013). The majority of the South Sudanese diaspora are the "*Lost Boys of Sudan*", also known as the "*Red Army*" or "*Seeds of the Nation*", a various groups of boys who were displaced and orphaned during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1987-2005) — including the authors of this paper. Many of them have gone on to achieve high-caliber university educations, advanced degrees, and professional experiences in various sectors—constituting a critical human resource for South Sudan. The majority of them, both inside and outside South Sudan, have the deeply-held desire to give back to their homeland—a desire and a willingness to contribute to South Sudan's state-building and development efforts. As a corollary, the South Sudanese government needs to utilize available human resources in the

diaspora. The first step for the South Sudanese government towards devising a strategy to facilitate stronger diaspora involvement in development is to identify its goals in undertaking this pursuit and define the internal tools and mechanisms (administrative, financial, etc.) required for the task. These goals of diaspora engagement cannot be set in a vacuum and should be seen as an integral part of development planning – not merely as a sideline or add-on. In addition, it must be remembered that while diasporas can bring important financial, intellectual and social capital to the development process, they cannot substitute for the cultivation of domestic resources (Martell 2019). With reasonably clear goals articulated, the second crucial step for the South Sudanese government is to know the diaspora that it hopes to engage. This involves serious, comprehensive data collection, which includes mapping the location of the diaspora, compiling inventories of diaspora skills and experiences, and engaging a wide range of diaspora members in listening exercises to understand what the diaspora has to offer, what it is willing to offer, and what it expects from the government in return. These techniques are also really useful in learning more about diaspora members' occupations and skills. The long-term endeavour of building partnership between the South Sudanese government and the diaspora is much more likely to succeed if it has a strong foundation of good communication and mutual trust. Because a partnership is a two-way street, all parties must feel that they are deriving value from the relationship (Agunias & Newland 2012). Building trust is therefore a necessary third element of the diaspora engagement strategy for South Sudan. With trust established between a South Sudan's government and its diaspora, the characteristics of the diaspora well understood, and the objectives of diaspora engagement clearly articulated, a partnership for development involving the diaspora can be more successfully mobilized. This may require the creation of new government institutions or the revitalization of existing ones such as the Diaspora Desks in the Office of the President and in ten state Governors' Offices across South Sudan.

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