



April 2022

Spring time is always a time of change. And spring time at Abukloi is no different. In Rumbek and the US, changes are happening to help us better meet the needs of our students.

This newsletter is full of updates on our recent trip to South Sudan. Right now, the school is administering Senior 4 end-of-the-year exams and registration for the new school year. More on that will be added to our website and social media platforms. We will keep you posted.

As always, we would love to hear any comments or questions you have. Don't hesitate to reach out. *-Mary*

Graduation Celebration!

Our fifth graduation was celebrated on March 19, a beautiful and hot day. But the heat did not dull one of the largest celebrations we have ever had. 153 students received their secondary diplomas. That's 153 students who persevered through coronavirus restrictions, health uncertainties, drought, and at times, hunger, to obtain this coveted prize.

The commencement was attended by U.S. board members Angelo Maker and Mary Cassidy-Anger, as well as South Sudan Foundation members Dr. Moses Matur Chol and Dr. Benjamin Achiek. We also heard encouraging words from members of parliament, state government officials, local chiefs, fellow secondary school leaders, and countless family and friends. The photos do

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not do justice to the energy felt by everyone there. To see more photos, please go to our website at Abukloi.org.



"In ten years, you will smile for the huge impact you have made in [South Sudan]."
- Hon. Awut Deng Acuil

First Annual Abukloi Alumni Reception



On March 15, Abukloi Foundation hosted a reception for Abukloi Secondary alumni living in Juba. Some older attendees believed this was the first time anything like this has been done in South Sudan. The event was attended by over 30 alumni and 40 others including parents of graduates, Members of Parliament, Ministers of Lakes States (where the school is located), and South Sudan and US Abukloi Foundation board members.

The theme of the evening was to encourage alumni to be the change they need. Foundation board member Dr. Benjamin Achiek said, "education is about building the character of learners and it was for this reason Abukloi was established." Hon. Chiguor Adong, MP-Tonj East, thanked the board members and American donors for their commitment and dedication to the school. He said, "support given to Abukloi is not to the people of Rumbek alone, but to our country at large." He described the alumni as the "source" of the solution to every problem South Sudan has. One of the highlights of the night were words given by comedian [Akau Jambo Puondak](#). Akau told the story of how he worked his way from a refugee camp in Kenya to appearing in international comedy festivals. He implored the audience not to wait for help but to make opportunities happen for themselves.

After many encouraging speeches everyone had time to socialize over a meal.



Meeting the Minister of Education

While in the capital Juba, Angelo and Mary were able to secure a meeting with the Hon. Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of General Education. The Hon. Acuil has been a champion of peace initiatives since raising her children while a widow during the 1980's civil war. She has been a member of parliament since 2010. Upon independence she was appointed as a member of the Cabinet of South Sudan. Since then she has served her country as Minister of Labor and Public Service, Minister of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and now the Minister of General Education and Instruction.

Mary began the conversation by thanking the honorable minister for giving her time to those from Abukloi Foundation. She commented that, "education is one of the areas America is very passionate about." She assured the minister that Americans' are committed to helping South Sudan succeed, but that, "Abukloi is a school run by South Sudanese for South Sudanese." Angelo Maker noted that, "we are looking forward to building a legacy for all South Sudanese and not a single tribe."

The Hon. Acuil explained her vision for education throughout the country citing teacher training as a priority. She is aware of the excellent reputation of Abukloi Secondary School and affirmed that we have her complete support in reaching our goals. She said,

America stood with us during our liberation struggle with Sudan leading to our independence. It is something we can never forget as a nation. We know the American government has always been with us . . . We support any partner in education. In ten years, you will smile for the huge impact you have made in this country."

The meeting was witnessed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of General Education Mr. Kuyok Abol (far right) and the Hon. Matur Makuer, Chairman of the Education Committee in the National Assembly (far left).



TOP TEN LIST

Things Learned at the Teacher Retreat

10. Abukloi Secondary School has an effective administration
9. Our teachers have a good relationship with the community
8. A daily meal is need to keep the students engaged
7. Teachers need professional training
6. Abukloi has a dedicated U.S. Board and donors
5. The school needs more female teachers
4. We have a productive learning environment
3. We need more classrooms
2. Abukloi has the most dedicated teachers in South Sudan
1. Soon: We will be the #1 school in Lakes State!

Meeting with Deputy Governor

Hon. Poth Madit Dut



Deputy Governor of Lakes State Hon. Poth Madit Dut was instrumental in securing the buildings and land the currently make up Abukloi Secondary School. During Abukloi's meeting with him in Rumbek, he said he was humbled by the excellent reputation Abukloi has earned over the years and assured us that we will always have the government's support and cooperation. He noted the need for schools to emphasize peace and reconciliation and citizenship, as well as provide more opportunities for girls. We assured him those were our priorities as well. While acknowledging our success, the deputy governor mused how much he would like to see Abukloi Foundation manage additional schools and possibly a university. He is proud to have Abukloi in Lakes and that it is run by Americans.



Seeking Team Members

Ask any of our board members why they joined the Abukloi Foundation team and they will say that they know they are making a positive, tangible impact on the lives of thousands of people. We don't just sit and talk about the problems. We come up with solutions.

You are already committed to the work Abukloi is doing. Would you like to be a part of guiding our future efforts? **We are seeking new board members.** We are especially looking for experience in marketing, grant writing, and governance, but most importantly, we are looking for team members who want to transform the next generation of South Sudanese citizens.

If you are interested in learning more about joining the Abukloi team, email VP@Abukloi.org.

Please visit us at Abukloi.org to
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