**South Sudan Should Adopt Experiential Education as the Pedagogic Creed for the National Curriculum.**

*“Education remains a major challenge as only a minority of our children has access to education. There is a need to scale up education enrolment quickly all over the country. To demonstrate our seriousness, within the first 100 days of the new government, 30 new primary schools and four new secondary schools will be constructed.” said President Salva Kiir when he officially inaugurated the South Sudan Legislative Assembly at Nyakuron Cultural Centre in Juba on Monday, 8 August 2011.*

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Education is a social institution by which desired social reforms are indoctrinated into the psyche of the students. It is a continuous creative process aims at the development and the full actualization of human potentials for the enrichment and successful progress of the society.

As such, the most effective form of pedagogic creed must be the one that enable the learners, the South Sudanese school-children, to release their latent capacities by developing analytical abilities and confidence in themselves and, in the process, instilled the vision that will enable them to become self-motivating agents of political and socio-economic change, serving the best interest of the new nation in which they will be the future leaders and sole beneficiaries.

If the purpose and the relevancy of education to our South Sudanese society is an instrument of social change, what form of pedagogic creed would be most appropriate for its successful dissemination? I would argue that education should be based on learning-by-doing. Learning by doing make the propagation of the learning process practical and relatable to the students.

What do I mean by learning by doing? Learning by doing, which is also called hands-on learning or experiential education, is the philosophy of education that describes the process that occurs between a teacher and student that infuses direct experience with the learning environment and content.

John Dewey, one of the pioneering American educational philosophers, advocated for this type of learning when he says: “If knowledge comes from the impressions made upon us by natural objects, it is impossible to procure knowledge without the use of objects which impresses the mind.”

This is especially urgently the case because students do learn best in an environment in which they are free to experiment, experience and interact with the set curriculum as well as amongst themselves. Therefore, in order for South Sudanese educational system to be most effective, educational content must be presented in a way that allows the students to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new acquired knowledge.

Not only will learners, under such learning environment, gain valuable knowledge and skills, but it will also present them with the rare opportunity to learn how to live and socially interact with one another, much as they do at their respective homes and tribal communities.

Hence, unlike most pedagogic creed across the continent of Africa, learning does not become something remote from their day to day activities when they are not in school. Instead, it becomes an extension of the very activities they daily engage in and of which they are most familiar with.

Consequently, this learning by doing approach will enable South Sudanese students to realize their full potentials and the ability to use those skills for the greater good of themselves and their immediate families, of the society and the human civilization.

Therefore, as the best way of preparing our future generation to both adequately acquire the current known knowledge and skills and to also pave way for them to initiate new scientific and social discoveries, we must give them the command of themselves in the learning environment so as to enable them to have the full and ready use of all their capacities.

This is because anything else other than learning by doing, say rote methodology which is the most ubiquitous pedagogic creed in Africa, will likely stifle creativity, curiosity, intuitiveness and self-confidence in our students.

With its sole purpose and relevance being the instrument of social change and necessary reforms within South Sudanese society, education, as John Dewey once observes, ought to be “a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.”

No doubt, learning by doing, the student-centered pedagogic creed, is the most effective learning methodology because it re-imagined the role of the teacher as a facilitator and a guide of student learning process.

In contrast, most learning experiences and processes on the African continent today have the teacher, in the words of Dewey, standing “at the front of the room doling out bits of information to be absorbed by passive students.”

Under the experiential educational system, the teacher, however, become a partner in the learning process, guiding students to independently discover meaning within the subject area. This is the essence of scientific discoveries—one that we, South Sudanese, sorely need as we embark on reconstruction and development of our war-ravaged new nation.

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