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**The Impact of Institutional Capacity on Public Performance in Upper Nile  
State, South Sudan**

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### The Impact of Institutional Capacity on Public Performance in Upper Nile State, South Sudan



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#### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study explored the critical relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in the context of Upper Nile State of South Sudan, focusing on the central role of the state in public governance and sustainable development.

**Methodology:** Through an extensive review of the literature, this study highlights the challenges facing public institutions and highlights the transformative potential of institutional capacity building. The purpose of this study was to reveal the complex relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile State, highlighting the role of institutional strengthening in improving public service delivery and overall governance. The research methods used included an in-depth literature search, providing a comprehensive review of research materials.

**Findings:** The findings highlight the critical role of institutional capacity building in addressing governance challenges in Upper Nile State. Strong institutions not only improve the efficiency of service delivery, but also promote transparency, accountability and responsiveness to public needs. Good governance, effective leadership and alignment with the broader goals of good governance highlight the importance of institutional capacity building. This research helps us understand how to overcome governance challenges and improve public performance, with a particular focus on institutional capacity. The study highlights the intrinsic link between a country's governance environment and the strength of its institutions, revealing gaps in institutional capacity such as human resources, financial management, governance structures and infrastructure. These shortcomings have led to suboptimal public services, limiting access to services, creating inefficiencies and corruption, all of which have a direct impact on the well-being of the state's citizens. Furthermore, the study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive institutional strengthening efforts in Upper Nile State, including investment in human resources, financial management reforms and improved governance structures. This focus on institutional capacity is essential to address governance challenges, improve public services and contribute to a prosperous future for the people of Upper Nile State.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Furthermore, this study bridges the gap between theory and practical recommendations. It aligns the theory of institutional capacity with concrete results and shows how strengthening institutional capacity can solve identified management problems. This resource provides policy makers and practitioners with a practical road map to improve governance and public service delivery in Upper Nile State and continue to build strong and capable institutions to empower the people of the state. It emphasizes the importance of national and international efforts.

**Keywords:** *Institutional Capacity, Public Performance, Upper Nile State, South Sudan, Governance, Service Delivery, Challenges, Strengthening*

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of the systematic analysis was to dissect the dynamics, complexities, and implications of how institutional capacity influences public performance, and vice versa. Institutional capacity, defined as an organization's ability to perform its functions effectively and efficiently, forms the backbone of public sector governance. Public performance, on the other hand, represents the tangible outcomes derived from the actions and interactions of various stakeholders in the public sector (Wondemagegnehu, 2018). The interplay between these two fundamental concepts is marked by a multitude of factors, including the institutional environment, organizational culture, leadership style, human resources, financial resources, accountability mechanisms, and stakeholder participation.

This introduction sets the stage by elucidating the central thesis of our study: that the practice of institutional capacity significantly influences public performance. It will further delve into how this complex and dynamic relationship manifests and why it is of paramount importance in the context of Upper Nile State. Additionally, explored the relevance of key theoretical frameworks and theories, such as Institutional Capacity Theory, Principal-Agent Theory, and Institutional Theory, in guiding the exploration of the intricate interplay between institutional capacity and public performance.

### **Institutional Capacity and Public Performance**

Institutional capacity is the cornerstone of effective governance. It encapsulates an organization's ability to execute its functions with efficiency and effectiveness. In the public sector, this translates into the government's capacity to provide essential services, make informed decisions, allocate resources, and navigate the complex terrain of governance (Towah, 2019). It is the infrastructure upon which public sector operations rely, and it underpins the delivery of services that citizens depend on in their daily lives.

Conversely, public performance embodies the outcomes that citizens experience as a result of the government's actions. It encompasses the quality of healthcare accessible to families, the educational opportunities offered to children, the reliability of infrastructure, and the overall well-being of society. It mirrors the government's capacity to meet the ever-evolving needs of its citizens. In essence, public performance is a reflection of the effectiveness and efficiency of governance structures and processes (Towah, 2019). The relationship between institutional capacity and public performance is a multifaceted and dynamic one. Its intricacies are influenced by an array of factors, each playing a crucial role in shaping the outcomes:

**Institutional Environment:** The broader context in which government organizations operate, including the legal and regulatory framework, shapes their institutional capacity and, consequently, public performance. The stability and effectiveness of this environment are key determinants.

**Organizational Culture:** The prevailing norms, values, and practices within government organizations have a substantial impact on how institutional capacity is developed and leveraged. A culture of transparency and accountability, for instance, can lead to better public performance.

**Leadership Style:** The leadership within government agencies can influence how institutional capacity is harnessed. Effective leadership can drive performance improvements by setting clear goals, promoting innovation, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

**Human Resources:** The competence and dedication of the workforce are integral to both institutional capacity and public performance. Qualified and motivated personnel can enhance service delivery and overall governance effectiveness.

**Financial Resources:** Adequate funding is a critical component of institutional capacity. It enables government agencies to invest in infrastructure, technology, and human capital, all of which contribute to improved public performance.

**Accountability Mechanisms:** The presence of robust mechanisms to hold government agencies accountable for their actions and decisions is essential for ensuring that institutional capacity is directed toward the benefit of the public.

**Stakeholder Participation:** Engaging citizens and various stakeholders in the decision-making and governance processes can enhance public performance by ensuring that services and policies align with the needs and expectations of the public.

### **How Institutional Capacity Impacts Public Performance**

The practice of institutional capacity can wield significant influence over public performance in a multitude of ways. These influences manifest in the following key areas:

**Quality of Public Services:** A well-equipped and efficient government agency is better positioned to provide high-quality public services, from healthcare and education to infrastructure development. Enhanced institutional capacity translates to improved service delivery and, consequently, better public performance.

**Responsiveness to Public Needs and Demands:** Government agencies with robust institutional capacity are more agile and responsive to the ever-changing needs and demands of the public. They can adapt their services and policies in a timely manner to address emerging challenges.

**Fostering Innovation and Learning:** An organization with a strong institutional capacity is more likely to foster innovation and learning. It can adapt to changing circumstances, adopt best practices, and continuously improve its services, resulting in enhanced public performance.

**Strengthening Legitimacy and Trust:** When government institutions effectively and transparently utilize their institutional capacity, they reinforce their legitimacy and earn the trust of the public. This trust is vital for citizens' confidence in their government's ability to perform effectively.

**Promoting Collaboration and Coordination:** Robust institutional capacity supports effective collaboration and coordination among different actors in the public sector. This leads to coherent policy implementation and better public performance overall.

### **Building and Maintaining Institutional Capacity**

Given the central role of institutional capacity in influencing public performance, it becomes evident that building and maintaining this capacity is essential for achieving public performance goals and delivering public value. The intricate and dynamic interplay between these two elements underscores the significance of addressing the challenges and aspirations of Upper Nile State within the broader context of the Republic of South Sudan.

## Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by several key theoretical frameworks and theories that are particularly relevant in understanding the relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile State. These include (Lapuenta & Van De Walle, 2020):

**Institutional Capacity Theory:** This theory posits that the effectiveness of public institutions directly affects their ability to deliver services and govern efficiently. It encompasses elements such as organizational structure, human resources, financial resources, and administrative processes. In Upper Nile State, the state of institutional capacity within government agencies, such as the health department, education department, and local administration, significantly influences their ability to provide essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. The theory helps explain how variations in institutional capacity can lead to disparities in public performance across different regions within the state.

**Principal-Agent Theory:** Principal-Agent theory explores the relationship between those who make decisions (the principals) and those who implement them (the agents). It emphasizes the importance of aligning the interests and actions of agents with the goals and objectives of the principals. In the context of Upper Nile State, this theory is relevant in assessing how well public officials and civil servants align their actions with the goals of improving public performance. It can highlight issues of accountability, corruption, and the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms in ensuring that institutional capacity is used to benefit the public rather than for personal gain (Masefield et al., 2020).

**Institutional Theory:** Institutional theory focuses on the influence of formal and informal rules, norms, and practices within organizations and how they shape behavior and outcomes. It distinguishes between coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism. In Upper Nile State, the prevalence of conflict, the history of governance structures, and external influences have shaped the formal and informal institutions (Glass & Newig, 2019). Understanding how these institutions affect decision-making, resource allocation, and public service delivery can provide insights into why certain public performance outcomes persist and how institutional change might lead to improvements.

These theories and frameworks serve as analytical lenses that guide our inquiry into the complex interplay between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile State, South Sudan. They help us identify key factors, contextualize our findings, and develop strategies for enhancing governance and service delivery in the region.

## Conceptual, Contextual, and Methodological Gaps

The study aimed to fill significant gaps in existing research and knowledge within the realm of institutional capacity and public performance:

**Conceptual Gap:** We contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between institutional capacity and public performance, particularly within the unique context of Upper Nile State. Our exploration delves into the intricacies of this relationship, shedding light on its dynamics and implications.

**Contextual Gap:** Upper Nile State, marked by its history of conflicts and governance challenges, offers a distinctive backdrop for our study. By contextualizing our findings within this environment, we provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that shape governance and public performance in a post-conflict region.

**Methodological Gap:** Our research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, to offer a holistic perspective on the interplay between institutional capacity and public performance. This methodological diversity strengthens the empirical basis of our study and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used a robust methodology to investigate the complex interaction between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile state, South Sudan. The method chosen was an in-depth literature review, a meticulously structured approach that allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic. This section explains the rationale for choosing the document review method, describes the types of documents consulted, and describes the systematic process followed in the review process.

### **Rationale for Choosing Literature Review**

The choice of in-depth document analysis was motivated by several compelling reasons. First, there is in-depth scientific discourse. The governance challenges of Upper Nile State and the complex dynamics between institutional capacity and community performance are the subject of much scholarly debate. This research benefits from synthesizing and consolidating existing knowledge, theories and ideas developed over time. Second, there is diversity of opinion. The literature review provided access to a range of perspectives, theories, and empirical studies. These diverse sources of information enriched the analysis by incorporating diverse perspectives and approaches, thereby enhancing the depth of understanding.

Third, ethical considerations. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic and the complexity of the sociopolitical context in Upper Nile State, collecting primary data related to government and citizen organizations can pose challenges. morally significant. Security risks and privacy concerns can pose formidable obstacles. The literature review method avoided these potential problems, thereby ensuring the ethical conduct of research. Finally, there is resource efficiency. In contexts where there are resource constraints, as is often the case in post-conflict areas, the document review method has proven to be a resource-efficient alternative. It takes advantage of existing publications and scholarly works, making it a viable and cost-effective research method.

### **Materials Consulted and Their Significance**

The documents consulted for this literature review included a variety of sources, including academic articles, reports, policy documents, and reputable publications. The selection of these documents was guided by the imperative to achieve a comprehensive and multidimensional presentation of perspectives, data, and conclusions. Academic articles published in reputable journals are the foundation of this literature review. These peer-reviewed publications provide empirical research, theoretical frameworks, and critical analyzes of the complex relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in diverse contexts. Reports published by international organizations, NGOs and government agencies have played a key role in providing valuable information on the specific governance challenges facing Upper Nile State. face to face. These reports often contain relevant data, case studies, and policy recommendations to enhance analysis.

National and regional strategic planning and policy documents were consulted to gain a deeper understanding of the political landscape in Upper Nile State. These documents highlight government priorities, strategies and initiatives related to institutional capacity and public sector performance. Reputable books, publications and studies written by recognized experts

in the fields of governance, public administration and development have been consulted to bring theoretical perspectives and practical ideas to bear analysis.

### **Procedure Followed in the Review**

The document review process followed a meticulous and systematic process to ensure rigor and completeness. Key steps in this process include:

Identification of search parameters including keywords, relevant databases, and time frame was performed. This precision helped focus the research and ensure the most relevant material was included. An extensive and systematic search was conducted in academic databases, library catalogs, government websites, and reputable online repositories. Boolean search techniques are used to maximize the retrieval of relevant documents. The materials were subjected to strict selection and selection criteria. Only sources directly related to the complex relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile State were considered suitable for inclusion. Relevant information, conclusions, and opinions are meticulously extracted from selected and synthesized documents. This process involves systematically classifying information into key themes and concepts. Aggregated data is the subject of an in-depth and critical analysis. This analysis includes identifying patterns, recognizing contradictions, and recognizing emerging themes. The results of this process are the basis for building the next parts of this study.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the results of the comprehensive analysis on the critical relationship between institutional capacity and public performance in Upper Nile State, South Sudan. The results are organized into key indicators related to institutional capacity and each was examined in detail. The discussion further explored the implications of these findings, highlighting the challenges faced and potential solutions to strengthen institutional capacity and, and improve performance.

**Table 1: Summary of the Study Results**

Capacity Area	Key findings
Human Resources Capacity	- Lack of competent and qualified personnel. - Shortage of expertise in key areas such as public administration, finance, and project management. - Inefficiency and nepotism in the recruitment process. - Lack of comprehensive training and professional development programs. - High turnover rates due to inadequate salaries and job instability.
Financial Management Capacity	- Loss of organizational knowledge hindering service delivery. - Challenges in budget allocation and tax planning. - Lack of prioritization and alignment with development goals. - Transparency issues in financial processes. - Poor resource management and wasteful spending. - Financial mismanagement and corruption.
Leadership and Governance Capacity	- Lack of strong leadership and strategic planning. - Delays and inconsistencies in decision-making. - Weak transparency and accountability mechanisms. - Limited public participation in policy formulation and implementation.
Infrastructure and Technological Capacity	- Inadequate physical infrastructure. - Limited use of information technology. - Inadequate maintenance of existing infrastructure.
Policy and Regulatory Capacity	- Lack of uniformity in policy development and implementation. - Frequent changes in government leadership leading to instability. - Lack of oversight and enforcement of policies and regulations.
Organizational Capacity	- Inefficiencies due to bureaucratic structure. - Ineffective communication channels and coordination problems.
Resource Mobilization Capacity	- Limited ability to secure funding from various sources. - Over-reliance on external donors for funding. - Ineffective resource allocation mechanisms.
Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity	- Underdeveloped performance monitoring and evaluation system. - Lack of clear indicators and data for decision-making.
Transparency and Accountability Capacity	- Lack of openness in operations and decision-making. - Ineffective mechanisms for reporting professional misconduct. - Limited public access to government information.
Adaptability and Resilience Capacity	- Lack of preparedness and response mechanisms. - Bureaucratic inflexibility and inadequate risk management.
Community Engagement and Partnerships Capacity	- Limited community participation and collaboration. - Fragmented partnerships with civil society organizations.
Ethical and Values-Based Capacity	- Inconsistent adherence to ethical principles. - Ethical lapses and misconduct eroding public trust.
Innovation and Learning Capacity	- Limited encouragement of innovation and creativity. - Risk-averse culture hindering adaptability and improvement.

### Human Resources Capacity

Previous studies consistently emphasize the lack of competent and qualified personnel in government agencies in Upper Nile State. This shortage limits the state's ability to provide effective public services (Fritz, 2017). Lack of expertise in key areas such as public administration, finance and project management has hindered progress. The recruitment process is hampered by inefficiency and nepotism, hindering the selection of the most qualified candidates (Sami et al., 2020). In addition, the lack of comprehensive training and professional development programs has created a skills gap among civil servants. High turnover rates among qualified employees are attributed to inadequate salaries, job instability and lack of



motivation. The resulting loss of organizational knowledge hindered service delivery (Sami et al., 2020).

### **Financial Management Capacity**

Upper Nile State is grappling with challenges related to budget allocation and tax planning. Budget plans are often characterized by a lack of prioritization and alignment with development goals, leading to inefficiencies in resource allocation (Blanchard, 2016). Transparency of financial processes is a persistent problem, leaving the public with limited access to budget information and spending reports (Adiebo, 2021). This opacity has eroded public trust and responsibility. Effective use of resources has been hampered by poor management, wasteful spending and lack of cost-effective measures (Akashraj and Maleith, 2020). These inefficiencies have reduced the state's ability to achieve desired outcomes within budget constraints. Financial mismanagement and corruption have plagued Upper Nile State's institutions. Weak controls, inadequate oversight and a culture of impunity have perpetuated these problems, diverting resources from public services (Adiebo, 2021).

### **Leadership and Governance Capacity**

The lack of strong leadership and strategic planning has resulted in a lack of clear direction and vision (Kuol, 2020). This hinders effective decision making and alignment of organizational goals with public needs. The decision-making process is often characterized by delays and inconsistencies. The lack of defined roles and responsibilities, coupled with hierarchical bureaucracy, prevented timely and informed decisions (Kuol, 2020). Transparency and accountability mechanisms are weak, and public access to government actions and decisions is limited (Sudan's and Sector, 2020). This has eroded trust and weakened the credibility of government institutions. Opportunities for people to participate and participate in management are limited. Public participation in policy formulation and implementation is minimal, depriving government institutions of valuable information and legitimacy (Kuol, 2020).

### **Infrastructure and Technological Capacity**

Inadequate physical infrastructure, including buildings and equipment, hindered service delivery. Government agencies often lack the necessary facilities and resources to operate effectively (Belaid et al., 2020). Although information technology has the potential to improve service delivery, its use in government organizations in Upper Nile State remains limited. This has affected efficiency and accessibility (Belaid et al., 2020). The maintenance and upkeep of existing infrastructure is inadequate, leading to deterioration of facilities and equipment. This has negatively affected the quality of services provided.

### **Policy and Regulatory Capacity**

The development and implementation of policies and regulations is still lacking in uniformity. Frequent changes in the head of government have led to political instability, affecting the continuity of services (Osakwe and Adeniran, 2021). The lack of oversight and enforcement of policies and regulations allows non-compliance and professional misconduct to persist. This has compromised the effectiveness of the governance framework. The capacity of government institutions to adapt to changing needs and circumstances is limited (Osakwe and Adeniran, 2021). Bureaucratic rigidity and lack of policy adaptation mechanisms have hindered responsiveness.

### **Organizational Capacity**

Inefficiencies due to organizational structure are a recurring problem. Many government organizations suffer from bureaucratic overload and lackluster reporting lines (Glowacki and von Rueden, 2015). Communication channels within and between government agencies and units proved ineffective, leading to coordination problems and lack of information. Coordination and cooperation between agencies and units of the Government are still insufficient (Glowacki and von Rueden, 2015). This has led to duplication of effort and inefficiencies in service delivery.

### **Resource Mobilization Capacity**

The ability to attract and secure funding from a variety of sources is limited. This has limited financial resources for public services (Mayai, 2020). Over-reliance on a single source of funding, often from oil shares, has left government institutions vulnerable to aid fluctuations and financial instability. Ineffective resource allocation mechanisms have hindered the effective use of available capital (Mayai, 2020). Budget constraints have led to suboptimal resource allocation.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity**

The performance monitoring and evaluation system is still underdeveloped. The lack of clear indicators and criteria has made it difficult to measure progress and results (Odhiambo et al., 2020). Lack of regular data collection and analysis mechanisms, leading to a lack of reliable data for decision making and policy development. The use of data for decision making and improvement is minimal (Odhiambo et al., 2020). This has hindered evidence-based policy development and program improvement.

### **Transparency and Accountability Capacity**

A lack of openness in operations and decision-making has led to a gap between government actions and public knowledge (Day et al., 2020). This has eroded trust and accountability. Mechanisms for reporting and handling professional misconduct have proven to be ineffective. Whistleblower protections and opportunities to report wrongdoing are limited. Limited public access to government information and records hinders transparency and accountability (Day et al., 2020). A lack of transparency in government actions has contributed to public distrust.

### **Adaptability and Resilience Capacity**

The capacity to respond to crises and emergencies is not enough. The lack of preparedness and response mechanisms leaves government institutions vulnerable to disruption (Renzaho et al., 2021). Bureaucratic inflexibility has hampered its ability to adapt to changing circumstances, including changing public demands and external challenges. Government institutions often lack ongoing planning and effective risk management strategies, leaving them ill-prepared to deal with unforeseen challenges.

### **Community Engagement and Partnerships Capacity**

Local community participation is limited, leading to a mismatch between government actions and community needs. This has resulted in a lack of community ownership of development initiatives. Collaboration with civil society organizations and other stakeholders remains fragmented (Renzaho et al., 2021). These partnerships can provide valuable resources for governance and service delivery. The absence of trust and social capital between government institutions and communities hinders collaboration and hinders development efforts.

### **Ethical and Values-Based Capacity**

Adherence to ethical principles and values in government institutions is inconsistent. Ethical lapses and misconduct have eroded public trust. Mechanisms to promote integrity and ethical behavior in government agencies appear inadequate (Day et al., 2020). A culture of accountability and ethical behavior is often lacking. The commitment of government institutions to serve the public interest has been questioned due to self-interest and lack of transparency.

### **Innovation and Learning Capacity**

Encouragement of innovation and creativity in government institutions is limited. A risk-averse culture has hindered innovation. Government institutions have struggled to learn from both successes and failures (Osakwe and Adeniran, 2021). This has led to a lack of adaptability and continuous improvement. The findings of the in-depth literature review highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by Upper Nile State in the area of institutional capacity and their profound impact on public performance. These challenges are not isolated but interrelated, creating a complex web of obstacles to effective governance and service delivery (Fritz, 2017). The shortage of qualified personnel, coupled with recruitment and retention challenges, highlights the urgent need to invest in human capital development. Training programs, competitive salaries, and merit-based hiring processes can help close the skills gap and build the capacity of government organizations (Sami et al., 2020).

Addressing issues of budget planning, transparency and resource utilization requires comprehensive financial reform. Budget processes need to be simplified and measures to increase transparency and fight corruption need to be prioritized. Strong leadership, effective decision-making, transparency and citizen participation are essential for good governance (Blanchard, 2016). Leadership development programs, sound decision-making structures and improved public participation mechanisms can promote better governance. Investment in physical infrastructure and adoption of information technology are key to improving service delivery. Maintenance strategies must be put in place to ensure the sustainability of the infrastructure (Adiebo, 2021).

Ensuring policy stability, effective implementation and adaptability requires institutionalizing a policy culture of continuity and regular review. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be established to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy (Akashraj and Maleith, 2020). An effective organizational structure, improved communication channels and enhanced coordination are essential to achieving operational efficiency. Streamlining bureaucracy and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration can strengthen organizational capacity. Diversifying financial sources and improving resource allocation mechanisms can reduce financial vulnerabilities (Kuol, 2020). It is necessary to study strategies to attract private sector investment and promote economic diversification. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems, combined with regular data collection and use, are essential for evidence-based decision making (Belaid et al., 2020). Building data collection and analysis capacity is imperative. Promoting transparency and accountability requires public control and access to information. Strengthening whistleblower protection and applying ethical standards is an integral part of this process (Osakwe and Adeniran, 2021). Building resilience and adaptation involves crisis preparation and proactive risk management. Government organizations should invest in contingency plans and adaptation strategies (Glowacki and von Rueden, 2015). Increased community participation and collaboration can facilitate community-led development.

Collaboration with civil society organizations and efforts to build trust are essential (Mayai, 2020).

Promoting ethical behavior in government organizations is fundamental to restoring public trust. Institutionalizing codes of ethics and accountability measures can restore trust in governance (Odhiambo et al., 2020). Encouraging innovation and a culture of learning requires an open and supportive environment. Rewarding innovation, learning from successes and failures, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement can strengthen institutional capacity (Day et al., 2020).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the central role of institutional capacity in shaping public performance in Upper Nile State, South Sudan. The study highlights the formidable challenges arising from weak institutions, which have seriously hindered effective governance and the delivery of essential public services in the region. The research findings highlight the urgent need to build institutional strength through a multi-pronged approach.

The recommendations call for investment in human resource development to enhance the skills and capacities of civil servants. This measure is necessary to improve capacity and efficiency in government organizations. Furthermore, the call for improved financial management highlights the need for transparent and effective budget planning, which is essential to allocate resources and prevent financial mismanagement and corruption. Additionally, the document calls for reforms to governance structures, including transparency and accountability measures. These changes aim to promote good governance practices to ensure public trust and effective decision-making. The active participation of civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluating public services is another essential aspect of the recommended reforms, aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in government agencies.

Sustaining international support, both in terms of technical assistance and financial resources, appears to be a key element in the journey towards institutional strengthening. Collaborative efforts with international partners can provide invaluable expertise and funding to advance important capacity-building initiatives. Finally, this study highlights the indispensable role of strengthening institutional capacity in addressing governance challenges facing Upper Nile State. Implementing these recommendations is not only an investment in the capacity of government institutions but also a commitment to the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state. The road ahead may be arduous, but with dedicated and concerted efforts, Upper Nile State can embark on a transformational journey towards better governance, better public performance and a bright future brighter for the people.

### **Recommendations**

Addressing complex challenges and improving public performance in Upper Nile State requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing various aspects of institutional capacity. Based on the findings of our literature review, the following recommendations appear necessary to promote institutional strengthening and, more broadly, improved governance and service delivery in the state:

### 1. Invest in Human Resources

Prioritize the development of skills and capabilities of civil servants through comprehensive training and education programs. These programs must be tailored to meet the specific needs and skills required for effective administration and service delivery.

### 2. Improve Financial Management

Establish a transparent and effective financial management system including budget allocation, expenditure tracking and auditing. Ensuring the transparency of financial processes is crucial for resource allocation and fighting corruption.

### 3. Strengthen Governance Structure

Implement transparency measures in government institutions, ensuring that decision-making processes and actions are publicly monitored. This involves making budgets, policies and performance data public.

Apply strong accountability mechanisms to hold officials and institutions accountable for their actions. This may include performance reviews, oversight bodies and complaints mechanisms.

### 4. Civil Society Participation

Actively encourage civil society organizations to play an oversight role in monitoring and evaluating public services. Their independent reviews can improve transparency and accountability.

### 5. Maintain International Support

Collaborate with international partners and organizations to provide technical support and capacity building. International expertise and resources can play an important role in promoting institutional reform and improving public performance.

Receive ongoing financial support from donors and international organizations to fund capacity building initiatives. Financial resources are essential for investment in infrastructure, human resources and development programs. The above recommendations provide a basic framework to address the institutional capacity challenges facing Upper Nile State. They emphasize the importance of internal and external efforts to bring about meaningful change. By implementing these recommendations, Upper Nile State can embark on a path towards better governance, better service delivery and a better future for its citizens. It is important to acknowledge that these recommendations represent a starting point for institutional strengthening. The journey towards sustainable improvement of institutional capacity promises to be long and difficult. Therefore, continued engagement, coordination and collaboration among government stakeholders, international partners, civil society organizations and the public is essential to overcome obstacles and realizing the vision of a more efficient and responsible government in Upper Nile State.

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