**International Journal of Advanced Educational Research**
**ISSN: 2455-6157**
**Impact Factor: RJIF 5.12**
**www.educationjournal.org**
**Volume 3; Issue 5; September 2018; Page No. 01-11**

# Development of education strategies for South Sudan aimed at building an inclusive, peaceful, and resilient society

**Dr. Mahmoud Kaleem**[1]

[1] Assistant Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, City University College of Ajman, Ajman UAE Sheikh Ammar Road, United Arab Emirates

**Abstract**
South Sudan is facing an education emergency. Recent years have seen some progress toward the Education for All (EFA) goals, with South Sudan's people demonstrating extraordinary resilience in their efforts to expand learning opportunities for their children. Yet Africa's newest nation still has some of the world's worst indicators for education. Low levels of enrollment and transition to secondary school, poor education quality, and high levels of gender disparity typify the current state of affairs. With the country facing a protracted fiscal crisis, there is now a real danger that progress toward the EFA goals will stall or be thrown into reverse gear. Yet this outcome is avoidable and accelerated progress is possible. But in the absence of a strong commitment on the part of donor governments and the country's other development partners, South Sudan's children and youth face a future of diminished opportunity in education.

Such an outcome would have devastating consequences, education holds the key to South Sudan's future. It is vital to poverty reduction and the development of strategies aimed at building an inclusive, peaceful, and resilient society. With one of the world's youngest populations, South Sudan needs education to create jobs and strengthen livelihoods. And without expanded opportunities for schooling, there will be no progress toward gender equity.

This paper makes the case for a concerted international effort to pull South Sudan back from the brink of a reversal in education. It starts from a simple premise: There will be no winners from a failure to act decisively. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) needs to demonstrate to its citizens that the country's children have the prospect of a better future and South Sudan's parents see education as the key to that future. Several donors have provided strong support to South Sudan. Their financial and technical support has helped to put in place the foundations of a national education system. Allowing these foundations to be eroded would represent an inefficient use of scarce aid resources. Ultimately, however, the real losers from inaction will be South Sudan's children.

The paper sets out concrete proposals in a number of areas with the potential to generate tangible gains for South Sudan's children, while at the same time strengthening capacity in the education system. It should be emphasized that the proposals are not intended as a comprehensive response to the wide range of challenges facing South Sudan. The objective, set out in the terms of reference for the ministerial summit, is to identify a small number of areas where strengthened cooperation might add value to current efforts.

**Keywords:** education strategies, EFA, GRSS

## Introduction

The headline numbers tell their own story on the state of education in South Sudan. Half of all primary school-age children some 1.35 million in total are out of school. Dropout rates are very high, especially between grades 4 and 7, and few children make it through to secondary education. Gender disparities are marked at all levels. There are only about 600 girls in the last grade of secondary education. And those children who are in school have limited prospects of learning. The school infrastructure is limited, classrooms are overcrowded, and there are chronic shortages of learning materials. However, the greatest barrier to effective learning is a shortage of adequately trained and properly supported teachers.

South Sudan's challenges in education cannot be viewed in isolation. High levels of poverty, food insecurity, and parental illiteracy transmit educational disadvantages from parents to children. Many out-of school children live in remote rural areas, often in pastoralist communities requiring non-formal and often mobile learning options. Conflict and insecurity are a perennial threat across large areas of the country, with aggression on the part of the Republic of Sudan and violence between communities contributing.

Set against these deficits and constraints, South Sudan has the potential to make a breakthrough in education. Many of the elements for success are in place. The country's people have an extraordinary resilience, matched by a commitment to education. Learning is widely seen as an exit route from poverty, and demand for education is high. Having developed a credible and ambitious national planning strategy for education, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) is well placed to provide leadership in meeting that demand through the development of a national education system. While the donor pool is relatively shallow, aid

agencies have greatly strengthened coordination and cooperation behind the government's strategy. South Sudan also hosts a range of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with a capacity for innovation, cost-effectiveness, and the delivery of results, even in the most difficult areas. Contributions from a number of organizations and individuals have helped to inform the analysis and recommendations. Special mention should be made in this context of contributions from MoGEI, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, education donors, UN agencies, and the NGOs that make up the National Education Forum (NEF) in South Sudan.

**Education monitoring system (EMS) process**

The "EMS process" consists of 5 steps:

1. **Fieldwork planning:** Designing, reviewing, and printing of the EFA questionnaires, verifying the EMS baseline list of schools, and preparing the schedules, budgets, and other necessary administrative and logistical arrangements.
2. **Data collection:** Firstly, running workshops that 'train the trainers' those sent to the field to subsequently conduct the training of Head Teachers on questionnaire completion, verifying the data through the County Education Offices (CEO), and retrieval of the completed questionnaires.
3. **Data processing:** Entering of data into the EMS database (including at decentralized level), merging of all the data, and final data cleaning and verification prior to analysis.
4. **Data dissemination:** Production of tools for distribution and use in education planning and management. The 2018 State Education Statistic Booklets are such tools, along with other outreach activities at regional and state levels.
5. **Data utilization:** Series of training sessions that guide national, state, and county education agencies and their partner organizations on the application of EMS data in building short-, mid-, and long-term strategic plans and budgets.


Each step require extensive coordination with stakeholders at state and school levels

**Several priority areas stand out**

a. **Strengthening the capacity of devolved education authorities to deliver Good-quality education, building on current initiatives developed by the ministries of finance and education with the support of donors:** Front-loaded support for devolved education would deliver results on the ground and help to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of the fiscal crisis.

**Table 1:** of schools by region, former state by state in 2017

| Region | Former State | State | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bahr el Ghazal | Western Bahr el Ghazal | Lol | 57 | 56 |
| | | Wau | 356 | 356 |
| | Northern Bahr el Ghazal | Aweil | 472 | 476 |
| | | Aweil East | 337 | 336 |
| | | Lol | 240 | 235 |
| | Warrap | Abyei AA | 30 | 33 |
| | | Tonj | 253 | 250 |
| | | Gogrial | 345 | 339 |
| | | Twic | 200 | 204 |
| | Lakes | Eastern Lakes | 189 | 182 |
| | | Western Lakes | 271 | 269 |
| | | Gok | 173 | 174 |
| Greater Upper Nile | Jonglei | Jongolei | 167 | 167 |
| | | Boma | 53 | 53 |
| | | Eastern Bieg | 130 | 129 |
| | | Western Bieg | 61 | 61 |
| | Upper Nile | Eastern Nile | 135 | 137 |
| | | Western Nile | 70 | 75 |
| | | Latjoor | 205 | 207 |
| | Unity | Ruweng | 54 | 50 |
| | | Southern Lech | 129 | 120 |
| Equator | Central Equatoria | Jubek | 470 | 470 |
| | | Yei River | 810 | 807 |
| | | Terekeka | 45 | 49 |
| | Western Equtoria | Amadi | 186 | 186 |
| | | Marida | 118 | 118 |
| | | Gbudwe | 297 | 297 |
| | Eastern Equtoria | Kapoeta | 146 | 146 |
| | | Imatong | 378 | 378 |
| Total | | | 6377 | 6360 |

b. **Creating incentives that increase the demand for education, especially on the part of young girls:** Relatively modest financial interventions have the potential to expand opportunities for many children currently out-of-school as a result of household poverty and gender disadvantages.
c. **Expanding in-service training and support for teachers and increasing the recruitment of female teachers:** Unless South Sudan's teachers are equipped and supported to deliver better learning outcomes, an improvement in education quality is unlikely.
d. **Developing the school infrastructure through a package of low-cost school construction, textbook supply, and community support initiatives:** While school buildings will not in themselves guarantee a high-quality education, the learning environment for South Sudan's children is currently unacceptable and could be improved.
e. **Responding to the needs of children and communities caught up in conflict:** Armed conflict is a barrier to expanded opportunity in South Sudan, and the current humanitarian aid architecture is inadequate. In addressing these priorities, this paper develops three specific proposals, each of which sets tangible targets and associated financing requirements. The implementation period envisaged for the proposals is 2013–16. Taken collectively, the three proposals envisage average annual financing from increased aid of about $180 million. Part of the financing would be channeled through a new pooled fund in education. More than 2 million children would benefit from the proposals. These children would have expanded opportunities not just to attend school but also to receive the quality of education they need to realize their potential. If successfully implemented, the proposals would have the effect of:
    1. Bringing an additional 300,000 children into the school system.
    2. Raising the standard of instruction for 1.5 million young learners.
    3. Extending education opportunities through a stipend program paying $10 per girl for 500,000 girls in grades 1– 4, reducing the risk of dropping out and creating incentives for girls' school attendance.
    4. Strengthening local government education delivery mechanisms, with the potential to improve access, reduce dropping out, and improving quality across the education system.
    5. Addressing the needs of thousands of children affected by humanitarian emergencies. Fiscal pressures limit the scope for additional government financing in the near term.

However, the GRSS would be expected to increase its share in recurrent and capital expenditure from 2016, as oil revenues return to pre-crisis levels. Looking ahead, the GRSS needs urgently to reconsider national budget priorities, and to act on its commitment to spend 10 percent of the budget on education. Spending on education and other basic services is currently being crowded out by excessive military spending. Given the depth of the fiscal crisis, aid donors will need to provide the bulk of the financing required for implementing the proposals. While this implies a sizable increase of current aid commitments just over $140 million in 2012–13 there is scope for broadening and deepening the donor presence in the country. It is important that any increase in aid is delivered through mechanisms that limit transaction costs, increase efficiency, and strengthen coordination within a results-based framework linked to the national education strategy. To that end, this paper proposes the creation of a pooled fund the EFA Acceleration Facility that builds on the best practices of the (now closed) Basic Services Fund, mirroring developments in the health sector.

**Indicator used to measure coverage**

A coverage ratio compares the estimate from the sample of the number of people who have a particular characteristic to the same estimate from updated decennial census figures. In this census different coverage ratio are examined for the various age/race/sex groupings to measure the drastic condition of education system in the South Sudan. Traditionally, information are collected through public reviews on questioner. The following indicators are used to obtain the conclusions.

Coverage rate refers to the percentage of "known" schools reached out to and accounted for in the EFA. For instance, a coverage rate of 90% means 90% of known schools received the EFA questionnaire, responded, and the completed questionnaire was entered into the EMIS database. "Known" schools include schools for which a reference exists in the database, a questionnaire was printed, and attempted to be delivered. Among these, "missing" schools did not return a questionnaire to the DSU, either because the school was not operational or because the school simply did not or could not return the questionnaire (for logistical or security reasons for example). Schools that confirmed they were out of operation were not included in coverage rate calculations, as well as schools yet to be identified and entered into the EMIS database. The EFA exercise discovers and registers with a unique EMIS code new schools each year. In 2016, the overall coverage rate against the 2017 database was 85%

New Entrants refer to new students of any age entering P1 for the first time in a school year. Entrants include students who have attended school elsewhere but are beginning P1 in a new school. Students who have left school but returned to school in P1 are also considered new entrants. Students attending P1 at the same school since the previous year are NOT new entrants; they are considered "repeaters" (further defined below).

**Indicators used to measure access**

The following indicators are used to measure the coverage rate:

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is used to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. A GER value of 100% indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-aged population. The "official school-age" for Primary education in South Sudan is 6-13, and Secondary education 14-17. The formulas for Primary GER and Secondary GER are:

$$\text{Primary GER} = \frac{\text{Total number of students of all ages in Primary school}}{\text{Population of ages 6-13 children}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{Secondary GER} = \frac{\text{Total number of students of all ages in Secondary school}}{\text{Population of ages 14-17 children}} \times 100\%$$

Gross Intake Rate (GIR) indicates the general level of access to primary education. It also indicates the capacity of the education system to provide access to P1 for the official school entrance age population. This rate can be over 100%, when the number of over-aged and under-aged children in P1 is excessive, relative to the children of the right age of admission. The "official Primary school entrance age" in South Sudan is age 6. The formula for GIR is:

$$\text{GIR} = \frac{\text{Total number of new entrants of all ages in P1}}{\text{Population of all age 6 children}} \times 100\%$$

**Net Enrolment Rate (NER)** shows the proportion of children of school age who are enrolled in school. NER applies only to children of official school age. NER below 100% provides a measure of school age children who are not enrolled in school. As NER only accounts for students of "official school-age," NER is always less than or equal to GER. The "official school-age" for Primary education in South Sudan is 6-13, and Secondary education 14-17. The formulas for primary NER and secondary NER are:

$$\text{Primary NER} = \frac{\text{Total number of students in school of ages 6-13}}{\text{Population of ages 6-13 children}} \times 100\%$$

Net Intake Rate (NIR) shows the level of access to Primary education of the eligible population of those with a Primary school-entrance age. A high NIR indicates a high degree of access to Primary education for children of the official Primary school entrance age. For countries wanting to achieve the goal of universal Primary education, a NIR of 100% is the ultimate objective. The "official Primary school entrance age" in South Sudan is age 6. In previous years, the NIR was calculated using the number of "new entrants" (not including repeaters); given that the number of new entrants of a certain age was not assessed in this year's study, the number of new entrants of age 6 in P1 was replaced with the total number of students of age 6 in P1. Therefore, the formula for NIR is:

$$\text{NIR} = \frac{\text{Total number of students of age 6 in P1}}{\text{Population of all age 6 children}} \times 100\%$$

Dropout Rate monitors education system coverage and student progression by measuring the proportion of students in a given cohort dropping out of or leaving the system altogether. The formula for dropout rate is:

$$\text{Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{Dropouts in cohort in } y+1}{\text{Enrolment in cohort in } y} \times 100\%$$

**Table 2:** Annual dropout rate in the different class levels in the south Sudan

| Class Level | Numbers of Dropouts | | | Dropout Rate% | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Overall | Male | Female |
| P1 | 15,863 | 8,766 | 7097 | 6.0% | 6.0% | 6.7% |
| P2 | 8,977 | 4,963 | 4014 | 6.0% | 5.0% | 6.6% |
| P3 | 7,643 | 4,876 | 2767 | 6.0% | 6.0% | 6.6% |
| P4 | 6,864 | 3,245 | 3619 | 6.0% | 5.0% | 7.1% |
| P5 | 4,655 | 2,765 | 1890 | 6.0% | 5.0% | 7.7% |
| P6 | 3,975 | 1,743 | 2232 | 7.0% | 6.0% | 9.2% |
| P7 | 2,649 | 1,965 | 684 | 8.0% | 6.0% | 10.1% |
| P8 | 2,190 | 1,500 | 690 | 9.0% | 7.0% | 13.0% |
| S1 | 1000 | 576 | 424 | 10.0% | 8.0% | 14.9% |
| S2 | 975 | 489 | 486 | 10.0% | 8.0% | 14.5% |
| S3 | 642 | 361 | 281 | 10.0% | 8.0% | 14.9% |
| S4 | 318 | 235 | 83 | 5.0% | 4.0% | 7.5% |
| G. Total | 55,751 | 31,484 | 24,267 | 7.42% | 11.38% | 9.90% |

**Table 3:** Enrolment rates of primary and secondary schools in 2017-18

| Type | Year | GER | NER | GIR | NIR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 2017 | 78% | 49.3% | 131.1% | 21.7% |
| | 2018 | 79.4% | 43.7% | 130.2% | 18% |
| Secondary | 2017 | 10.2% | 4.6% | 13.9% | 2% |
| | 2018 | 11.1% | 4% | 12.7% | 2.7% |

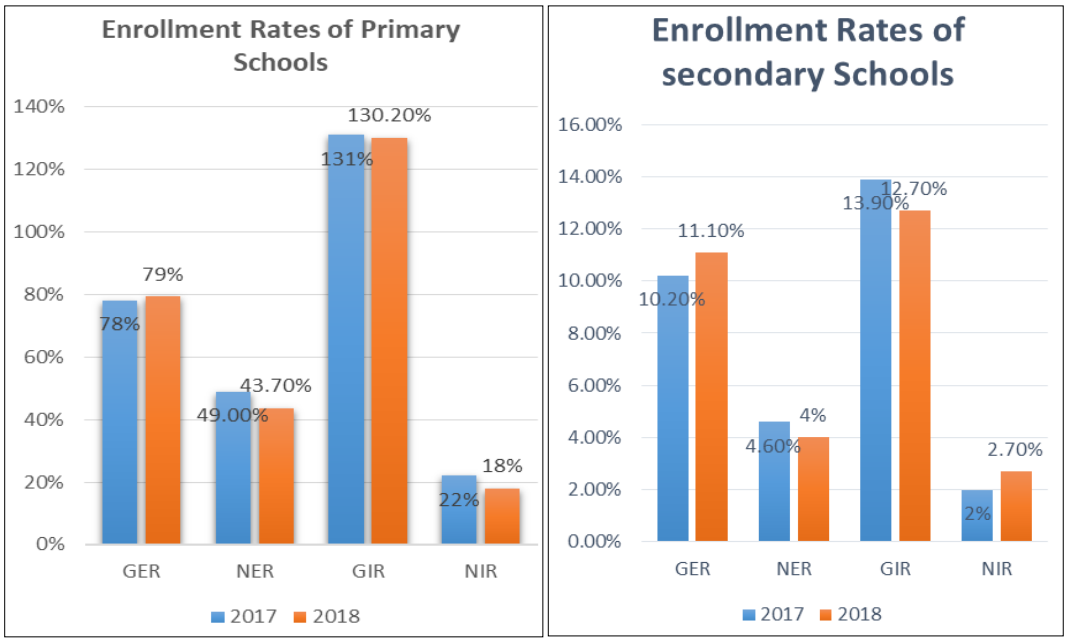


**Fig 1:** GIR and NIR are useful when used in combination, as the difference between these two ratios indicates the rate of deviation from the official age intake.

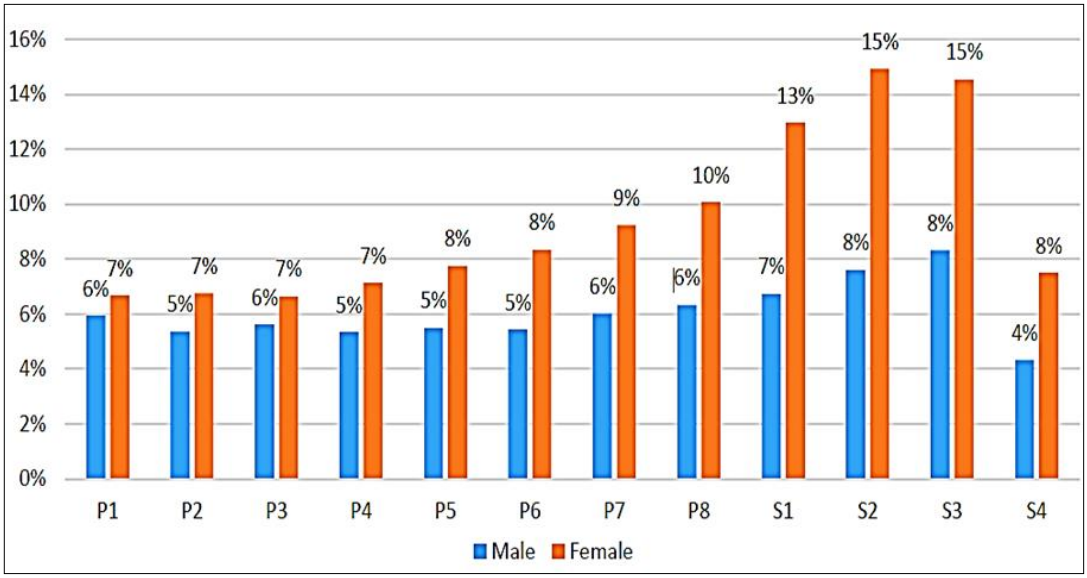


**Fig 2:** Primary and Secondary school dropout rate by grade and gender

**Table 4:** Main cause of students drop by the gender

| Type | Total | % Total | Male | Male % | Female | Female % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Could not pay fees | 9763 | 12 | 5742 | 58.81 | 4021 | 41.19 |
| Long distance to school | 9683 | 10 | 4947 | 51.08 | 4736 | 48.91 |
| Family Issues | 8071 | 8 | 5728 | 70.97 | 2343 | 29.03 |
| Emigrant | 9699 | 13 | 6821 | 70.32 | 2878 | 29.67 |
| Marriage | 3716 | 6 | 1862 | 50.10 | 1854 | 49.89 |
| Prolonged illness | 2473 | 6 | 1239 | 50.10 | 1234 | 49.90 |
| Insecurity on way | 4691 | 4.7 | 2981 | 63.54 | 1710 | 36.45 |
| Harassment | 3682 | 6 | 1209 | 32.83 | 2473 | 67.16 |
| Pregnancy | 2421 | 5 | 0 | 0.00 | 2141 | 88.43 |
| Military confliction | 4589 | 9 | 2577 | 56.15 | 2012 | 43.84 |
| Other reasons | 5073 | 8 | 2371 | 46.73 | 2702 | 53.26 |
| Total | 63861 | 87.8 | 35477 | 55.55 | 28384 | 44.45 |

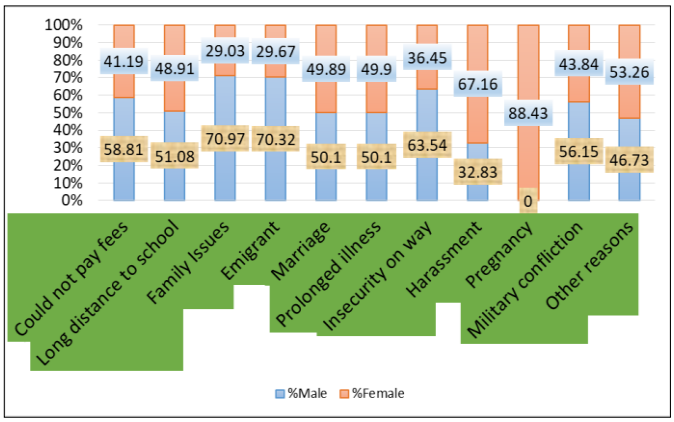


**Fig 3:** Different causes of the dropout in south Sudanese schools

**Indicator used to measure gender parity**

Gender Parity Index (GPI) measures the relative access to education of boys and girls. It is calculated as the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at different levels of education to the number of male students in each level. To standardize the effects of the population structure of the appropriate age groups, the GPI of the GER for each level of education is used. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the sexes; a GPI that varies between 0 and 1 typically means a disparity in favors of males; whereas a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favors of females. The indicator is an imperfect measure of the accessibility of schooling for girls because it does not allow a determination of whether improvements in the ratio reflect an increase in girls' school enrolment (desirable) or a decrease in boys' school enrolment (undesirable). It also does not show whether the overall level of participation in education is now lower or higher.

$$GPI = \frac{\text{Female Gross Enrolment Ratio}}{\text{Male Gross Enrolment Ratio}}$$

**Indicators Used to Measure Resource**

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) measures the level of human resources input in terms of number of teachers in relation to the number of students. A high PTR suggests that each teacher is responsible for a large number of students; the higher the PTR, the lower the relative access of students to teachers. It is generally assumed that a low PTR signifies smaller classes, which enables the teacher to pay more attention to individual students, which will likely in the long run result in a better performance of students. The formula for PTR is:

$$PTR = \frac{\text{Total number of students}}{\text{Total number of teachers}}$$

Pupil-Classroom Ratio (PCR) measures the level of basic facilities available in terms of the number of classrooms in Relation to the size of the student population. The higher the PCR, the lower the relative access of students to classrooms. It is generally assumed that a low PCR signifies an environment more conducive to learning, likely in the long run to result in a better performance from students. To support the education reform towards providing all students with stable learning spaces, this report counts only permanent and semi-permanent Classrooms in the calculation. The formula for PCR is:

$$PCR = \frac{\text{Total number of students}}{\text{Total number of perm. and semi-perm. classrooms}}$$

**The Different Suggestion to Improve the Learning Outcomes and Infrastructure**

Here are some issues along with suggestions are highlighted for improving the education system in the South Sudan.

1. **Improve the teacher workforce and Pupil Teacher ratio**

South Sudan's teacher workforce is not satisfactory growing rapidly. There are about 30,000 teachers across the country. But many of these teachers are unqualified and most receive little financial support and salaries. The bar chart given below illustrated the actual facts about the number of primary school teachers by their professional qualification and gender perception. Not all teachers are on the government payroll. Estimates suggest that about 8,000 teachers work on an informal basis. These teachers are typically paid through school charges, which are in turn keeping many children out of school. There are relatively few women in the teaching profession. In 2012, just 13 percent of the teacher workforce at the primary level was female, and this rate fell to 10 percent at the secondary level. The limited number of female teachers almost certainly plays a part in reinforcing gender disparities, not least by depriving young girls of access to potential role models. The average pupil/teacher ratio has been increasing over time.

The national ratio in 2012 stood at 52:1 one of the highest in the world. Yet this figure understates the problem. In Unity and Upper Nile states, the pupil/teacher ratio is 71:1, rising to 104:1 in Jonglei and the ratio of pupils to qualified teachers is 117:1. Behind these headline numbers is an issue that goes to the heart of the learning shortfalls in South Sudan's education system: the chronic shortage of qualified teachers. One-third of South Sudan's teachers have only a primary school education. The qualification status of 20 percent of South Sudan's teachers is unknown. This means that fewer than half of the country's teachers have received training, though in most cases this is likely to cover only limited in-service training. Just 16 percent of those teaching in primary schools have professional qualifications. There are marked variations across states, with Unity, Jonglei, and Eastern Equatoria having very low shares of qualified teachers in the workforce.

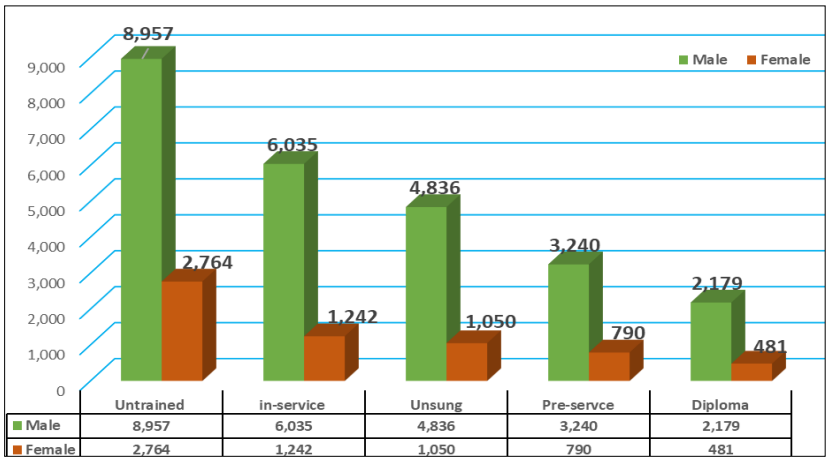


**Fig 4:** Number of School Teachers by Their Professional Education and Gender

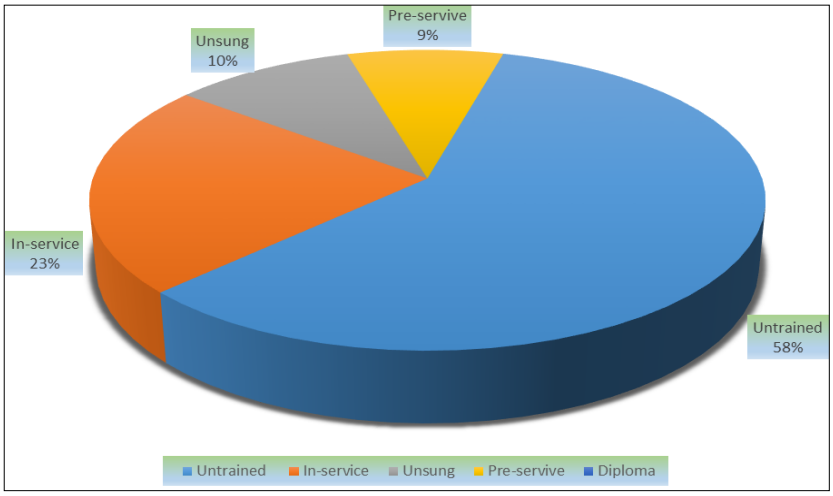


**Fig 5:** Percentage of School Teacher by Profession

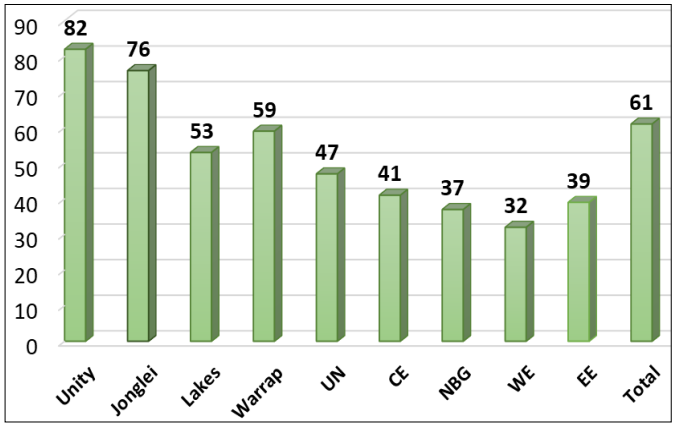


**Fig 6:** Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) by State

Would struggle to master the curriculum they are supposed to teach. One survey carried out by the World Bank found that only 28 percent of teachers in mathematics and 31 percent in languages were able to score in the highest grade of primary school tests (Charlie Goldsmith Associates 2011). This lack of content knowledge is allied to weaknesses in basic pedagogical skills, particularly with respect to teaching literacy and numeracy to first-generation learners. Critically, while Arabic is widely spoken in South Sudan, English is the primary language of instruction. Given that the majority of teachers have limited understanding of English, this is a serious challenge to education quality. Despite the urgent need for skills upgrading, very few teachers receive effective support. About two thirds of teachers report having no pre-service training, while in-service training is limited in coverage, and largely unknown in terms of qualitative outcomes (World Bank 2012) [7]. Moreover, teachers' time on task is inadequate due to high pupil/teacher ratios, inadequate training, salary related problems, and the three "H" housing, health, and hardship (World Bank 2012) [7]. Evidence from four states suggests that a majority of teachers are actively teaching for fewer than 10 hours a week, compared with best practice norms of more than 30 hours. Unsurprisingly, the majority of schools and teachers do not currently cover the syllabus they are expected to teach.

Only about one-quarter of schools are able to offer a cycle of teaching that extends from grades 1 through 7, and just 13 percent cover up to grade 8. Detailed analytical work on teacher supply graphically illustrates the mountain that South Sudan must climb. Based on current census data, South Sudan would need 60,000 teachers to stay within a pupil/teacher ratio of 50:1 under conditions of universal enrollment. This implies a deficit of somewhere between 32,000 and 43,000 teachers, depending on whether the reference point is the current

workforce or the number of teachers on the payroll. The current forecast for teachers graduating from teacher training institutes is just 1,100 (700 from government institutes, and 400 from nongovernment institutes). Against this backdrop, there is an urgent need to raise the skills level of the volunteer workforces and to expand the flow of teachers who have received training an issue to which we return below. Teacher needs to be expert in their subjects, because unless, the teachers are themselves aware of the subject they are teaching, what can be expected of the students. Therefore, training the teachers should be the first step to ensure that the most fundamental requirement can be met.

## 2. School infrastructure

School infrastructure constraints magnify the problems that come with an overstretched and undertrained teacher workforce. Far too many of South Sudan's children are sitting in classrooms that are not equipped for effective learning and far too many are sitting in the open air. Rising enrollment has placed strains on classroom availability. The number of classrooms available has increased far more slowly than the rise in enrollment. Average enrollment per school has increased from 2,922 in 2006 to over 3,200 (GRSS 2012c). Currently, there is a ratio of 125 pupils to each classroom. While decent-quality schools and classrooms do not guarantee a route to improved learning, many of South Sudan's schools fall far short of an acceptable level. According to the most recent EMIS data, only 34 percent of primary school operate in permanent structures. One-third of children are being taught in the open air, and another one-quarter in temporary structures.

Alarmingly, almost two of every three schools do not have access to a safe source of drinking water or latrines. On a rule-of-thumb estimate, South Sudan needs to at least double and possibly triple the number of classrooms in the country. In addition, there is a notable lack of mobile teaching options for those unable to attend formal school settings, such as the pastoralist communities mentioned above.

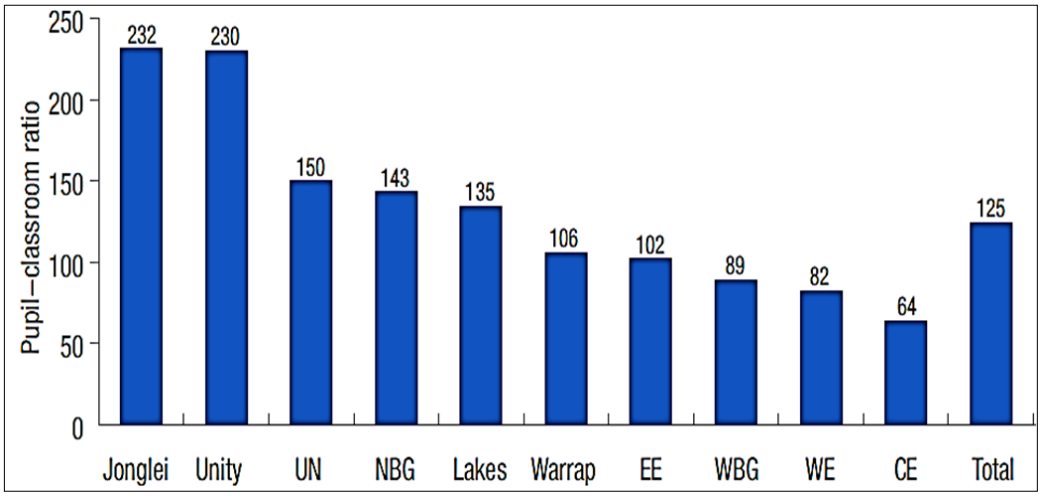


**Fig 7:** An Average Primary School Pupil-Classroom Ratio (PCR) by State, 2011

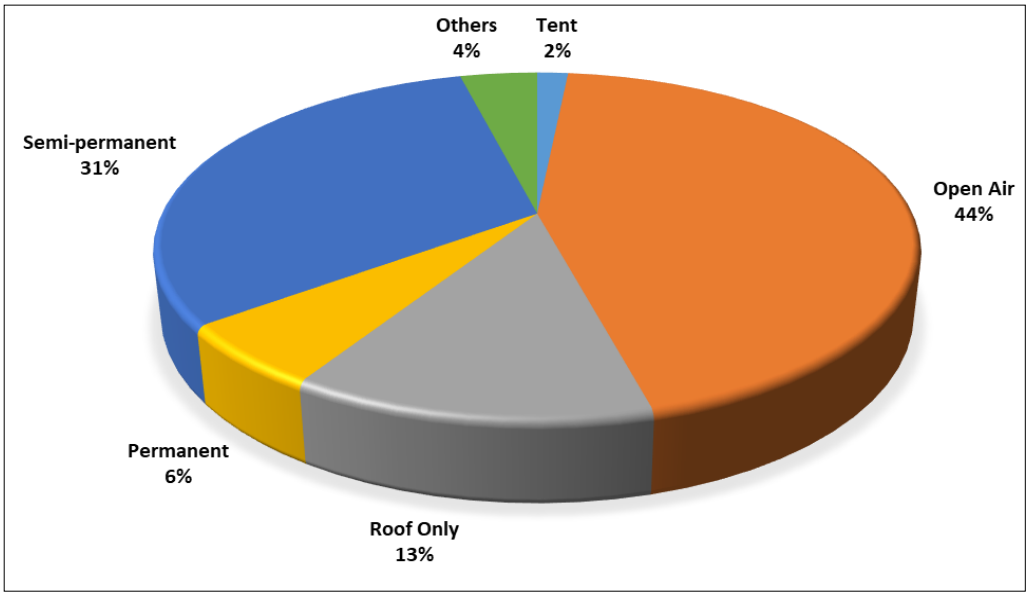


**Fig 8:** Average Ratio of Primary School by Classroom Type

Shortages of textbooks have reinforced wider problems in the learning environment. Nationally, there is just 1 textbook for

every 5 learners, rising to 1 book for every 10 learners in some states. Many remote schools have no textbooks or teaching materials. With DFID providing support for the printing and distribution of textbooks to all 10 states (9.6 million books in total), the overall picture on textbook availability may be about to improve. However, in the absence of long-term budget commitments, there is a danger that short-run improvements will give way over time to longer-term shortages. Classroom overcrowding means that schools often operate multiple shifts with multi-grade classes. Given the skills levels and support available to the teacher workforce, this is suboptimal. Delivering effective instruction to children of varied ages requires a high level of proficiency on the part of teachers, access to decent-quality teaching materials, support from a teacher assistants, and critically pupil/teacher ratios under 40. None of these conditions are met in a typical primary school in South Sudan.

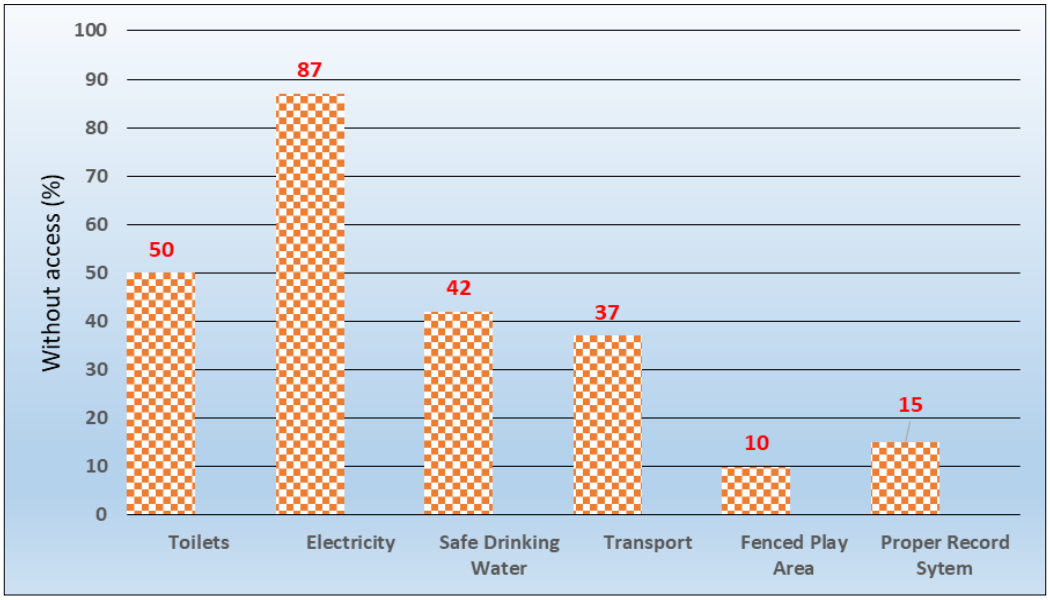


**Fig 9:** Percentage of Schools without Access to basic Facilities

## 3. Learning outcomes

South Sudan's children and their parents are making great efforts to secure the chance of an education. Yet these efforts are not, for the most part, being rewarded with the results that might be expected. There is no national learning assessment currently available, but there is strong evidence that learning achievements are very low. In one survey carried out by the World Bank, fewer than 8 percent of grade 6 students scored more than 50 percent in a sample mathematics test, with the average score of 38 well below the minimum competency level (World Bank 2012) [7]. School examination results provide another source of information on learning achievement, though there are issues of comparability across states. Research by the World Bank based on EMIS data found that the national pass rate for the grade 8 examination was 80 percent for both girls and boys. There were wide variations around the average, both by state and by gender. Pass rates were lowest in Jonglei (where girls outperformed boys) and the Equatorias (where boys outperformed girls) and were highest in Warrap and Lakes (where boys registered a significant advantage). The transition from the pro-independence system has been a difficult one, with reforms complicating efforts to improve quality. English has been adopted as the medium of instruction in South Sudan's schools, marking a break from the Arab language system imposed under the old regime. However, many of South Sudan's teachers were trained in Arabic. And while the adoption of English has a great symbolic significance, local language teaching has been relatively neglected. Many of South Sudan's children are learning in languages other than their home language, which is not conducive to effective learning, especially in the early grades (UNESCO 2010) [2].

Curriculum development has been problematic. School curricula and exam systems have been adapted from neighboring countries including Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya leading to fragmentation across the national system. Finalizing the development of a new national curriculum is an urgent priority, and progress has been made toward the development of a new primary curriculum covering 14 subjects. South Sudan needs a school curriculum that enhances the quality and perceived relevance of education. But the curriculum must also address the challenge of building a sense of national identity that is respectful of national diversity and conducive to the development of a peaceful and resilient society.

## 4. Involvement Local Government

South Sudan is building a national education system from scratch. At the time of the CPA, there were no functioning education institutions. Developing those institutions in an environment marked by severe budget constraints, insecurity, and a very small pool of administrators with anything more than a secondary education is a formidable task. Nonetheless, much progress has been made. The past few years have seen the emergence of national education management systems extending from the central government to state governments and devolved to local authorities. However, there are strains

and capacity constraints across the system, notably in the devolved subnational authorities.

## 5. Decentralized Education System

South Sudan's decentralized system assigns a clear delineation of responsibilities across the different levels of government. The county education departments are responsible for the delivery of primary education, in collaboration with education inspectors at the payam level. State ministries of education provide leadership for education service delivery and management, disseminate policies and guidelines, plan resource allocation for the education sector at the state level, and inspect performance at the county level. At the national level, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction provides overall leadership; develops policies, guidelines, and standards; allocates resources through the annual budget process; sets the national curriculum; and supervises the overall provision of primary and secondary education services in the country. The ability of each level of government to effectively carry out these responsibilities ultimately governs the degree and quality of primary education in South Sudan. In this regard, channeling development partner assistance in a way that supports different levels of government to better fulfill their prescribed mandates presents the most promising and sustainable solution to improving access and learning.

The GRSS has actively sought to promote this approach. Through the development of a primary education Service Delivery Framework in late 2012, the government diagnosed a number of system and capacity challenges that are preventing local governments from fulfilling their mandate to deliver primary education. On the financing issue, it was found that under the current intergovernmental fiscal transfer system, little nonwage funding is reaching local governments for primary education service delivery. County education departments are not receiving a reliable source of operating funding from the central and state governments, which, given their limited ability generate revenues from their own resources, means that they are often left unable to carry out their key managerial and inspection functions. Moreover, transfers to states through the local government grant system are weakly related to enrollment, the cost of provision, or the level of unmet need. This in turn has hampered the development of effective oversight and support through local government. The lack of operating funds at the school level is also having a number of negative consequences. One of them is the endemic shortage of basic inputs for education described above. Two-thirds of students surveyed in the Service Delivery Study did not even have paper to write on, and one-fifth did not have writing instruments. Such shortages inevitably limit opportunities for reinforcing what is taught (World Bank 2016). Another concern is that, unable to cover their basic operating costs for school supplies or basic maintenance of infrastructure, many schools are charging fees a financing approach that limits access for the poorest children, reinforces gender inequality (since many parents are unwilling to pay for female education), and contributes to high dropout rates.

## 6. Financing and the Current Budget Situation

Along with other basic services, education in South Sudan has suffered from chronic under-financing. The loss of oil revenues associated with the dispute over transit fees with the Government of Sudan (Khartoum) threatens to make a bad situation far worse. Depending on the response of government and donors, the fiscal crisis has the potential not just to slow progress toward the goals set out in the national education strategy but also to reverse the progress achieved in recent years. Even before the loss of oil revenues, there were financing gaps in the education plan. The estimated cost of the full plan is $1.46 billion over five years, or $255 million annually. Allocations for primary education represent about half the proposed budget, with secondary and higher education, respectively, allocated 18 percent and 19 percent. The financing gap is estimated at between $132 million and $72 million annually, depending on the scenario for domestic resource mobilization. The disruption of oil revenues has left South Sudan with a fiscal crisis and created uncertainty over government financing capacity. Faced with the imposition by the Republic of Sudan of excessive transit fees and unilateral seizure of oil, the authorities in South Sudan closed down oil production during 2012. With oil accounting for 98 percent of government revenues and a slightly smaller share of export earnings, the embargo on oil exports had far-reaching economic effects. Fiscal pressures have forced the GRSS to adopt two successive austerity budgets. Meanwhile, exchange rate depreciation has increased import prices and generated inflationary pressures.

Following successful negotiations under the African Union's auspices, an agreement has now been reached on transit fees. However, the fall-out effects will continue for some time. The resumption of oil exports is unlikely to take place in the current fiscal year, and it may be some 18 months before revenue flows reach their pre-crisis level. At the time of writing, the budget was still being finalized, but financing pressures are sure to continue. Even though the dispute over transit fees has now been resolved, there is still uncertainty over the timing of future oil revenue flows. The education system has been affected by the fiscal crisis. The central government's transfers to state and local governments have fallen below planned levels, reinforcing the financial pressures operating at the lower levels of the education system. There are reports that payments to teachers have been disrupted. This may have led some teachers to leave the workforce in search of more reliable sources of income. Meanwhile, the costs of school construction have increased in tandem with exchange rate depreciation because of the high import content of the materials used. Not all the financing constraints in the education sector can be attributed to the fiscal crisis. As in other social sectors, spending on education has been crowded out by expenditures on the armed forces. South Sudan has been allocating just 5 to 7 percent of its budget to education one of the lowest levels in the world. Military spending, inflated by ongoing cross-border tensions, officially accounts for 28 percent of the budget, but is widely thought to represent more than half of expenditures one of the highest levels in the world. The government has recognized the need to prioritize education spending. President has pledged to protect spending

On basic education. The new Education Bill envisages a minimum 10 percent budget allocation for education. Acting on this commitment would appear to be a critical requirement for implementing the national education strategy.

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