

These fact sheets are intended to provide a short overview of the current situation affecting women and children, and outline UNICEF's support in each major sector. They are not designed as a comprehensive situation analysis.

Current situation

The 2006 Sudan Household Health Survey undertaken by the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan, with support from UNICEF, provided the first national indicators on access to education for primary and secondary education for more than 20 years.

Net intake in primary education	29.5%
Net attendance rate of primary aged children	53.7%
Gender parity index (primary school)	0.93
Primary school attendance rate of children of secondary school age	35.5%
Children reaching grade 5	90.3%
Primary completion rate	19.4%
Transition to secondary school	64.5%

The Federal Ministry of General Education reports that in the northern states gross primary school enrolment stands at 67.8 per cent, while data from Southern Sudan indicates that enrolment reached over 1.2 million in 2007. Overall, the 2006 Sudan Household Health Survey reported that only 53 percent of children are actually attending classes at any level (although the rapid increase in enrolment in Southern Sudan has probably superseded these statistics), and 49 per cent of girls are missing out on their primary education. Over 900 schools in Southern Sudan are classified as 'open air' learning spaces and nearly all teachers are untrained volunteers, usually unpaid.

In its effort to improve education indicators by the year 2012, UNICEF and its partners in Sudan are striving to achieve key results that will include:

- Enabling 5.2 million children and young people to access quality basic education and other forms of learning,
- Assisting 250,000 nomadic children to move from primary to secondary schools and
- Ensuring 1 million children currently out of school have access to alternative forms of education.

Key issues affecting access to education

Shortages of learning spaces and qualified teachers

In the northern states, nearly 5 per cent of primary students have to travel more than 3 kilometres to attend the nearest school, while in urban areas class sizes can exceed 100 students (Federal Ministry of General Education, 2007). In Southern Sudan, coverage of learning spaces ranges from one per five communities to as high as one for every 15 communities.



The Teacher Training Assessment for the northern states of Sudan (source) found that there may be as many as 110,000 unqualified teachers in the education system in the north of Sudan. The Assessment indicated that in order to achieve universal primary education without placing additional strain on class sizes, a further 9,500 qualified teachers would be needed every year until 2015. In Southern Sudan, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology reports that 48 per cent of teachers have only completed primary education, with no other qualifications, while a further 7,750 teachers would be required in order to meet the education MDGs.

Lack of alternative and 'out of school' education

There is a shortage in learning programmes for children who are not enrolled in formal schooling, especially in Southern Sudan. Efforts are being made to develop life-skills, literacy, numeracy and vocational training for such young people, with a special focus on demobilized child soldiers, returnee children and other vulnerable children.

Costs of education

While basic education is officially free in Sudan, parents incur 'out of pocket' costs including contributions towards text books, examination fees, school uniforms and even teacher salaries. In larger families these costs are known to be a major barrier to enrolment, with girls often suffering in favour of boys' education.

Societal attitudes to education

In some communities, the role of girls is seen as being limited to domestic helpers, and future wives and mothers, playing a supportive role to the men of the family. There is a low premium, especially in rural areas, on sending girls to school. Lack of single-sex classes, or female teachers, also act as a barrier to girls attending school especially as they get older.

In rural areas especially, boys and girls are expected to work in support of their families. This often keeps children out of school unless class schedules are adapted to fit around key times such as planting and harvesting.

UNICEF's programmatic approach

- Expanding access to basic education— through school construction, provision of school supplies, promotion of 'Alternative Learning Approaches' including vocational training, adult education and literacy programmes, teacher training and social mobilization to promote the value of education amongst Sudanese communities.
- Support to early childhood development, school readiness and parenting programmes are also being planned. Special attention is being paid to groups such as nomadic children, amongst whom gross enrolment rates are especially low.
- Promoting girls' education – for example through support to the Girls' Education Movement in Southern Sudan, where children themselves play a central role in promoting education amongst families, and through the development of Parent Teacher Associations.
- Supporting child-friendly school environments, including the provision of water and sanitation facilities. To make schools more conducive to learning, there is a strong focus on improved teaching and learning skills – including curriculum reform that encompasses issues such as literacy and numeracy, life skills, psychosocial development, and HIV and AIDS awareness – built around a framework of child-centered teaching.
- Supporting the development of institutional capacity at government level to ensure that improvements are sustainable. This includes the establishment of an Education Management Information System to help planners and administrators, support to education policies covering issues such as budgeting and resource allocations, improved teacher training courses and support for education authorities to better manage financial and human resources

UNICEF-supported achievements in 2008

Key education results supported through UNICEF's programmes in 2008 included:

- Supporting the enrolment of nearly 557,000 additional children (44 per cent of them girls) enrolled in Grade 1 in the north of Sudan, and an estimated 400,000 children in Southern Sudan.
- Construction and rehabilitation of more than 1,900 new and temporary classrooms in the north of Sudan, and 24 schools constructed or rehabilitated in Southern Sudan.
- Provision of classroom and learning materials benefiting more than 1.5 million children across Sudan, in addition to providing school uniforms for more than 61,000 girls in the north of the country and working with the UN World Food Programme to support school feeding initiatives that benefited more than 710,000 school children in the northern states.
- Supporting the development and implementation of teacher training programmes focusing on child-friendly teaching methodologies and classroom management skills for over 9,000 teachers in the whole of Sudan.
- Supporting the participation of local communities in the design and delivery of education, through the training of nearly 10,000 members of local Parent Teacher Associations, as well as training and other activities for more than 11,000 children through networks of school clubs and the Girls' Education Movement in Southern Sudan.

Building institutional capacity in Southern Sudan

Two decades of civil war left Southern Sudan's education system in tatters. School buildings in many areas had been destroyed, occupied or neglected. Education records were incomplete, destroyed or simply non-existent. And the region's small band of qualified teachers had scattered, some of them refugees in neighbouring states.

The new generation of education officials had to start from scratch.

The first job for George Mogga, the new Director of Planning at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the Government of Southern Sudan, was to gather data – on who across Southern Sudan's vast expanses was qualified to teach, and who needed teaching.

"You can't plan without information," he said. "You can't plan without knowing what is on the ground."

So his team started setting up an education information management system, a series of databases and policies and other documents all designed to turn their ideas into action.

In support of these efforts, in 2007, UNICEF set itself the task of "increasing the institutional capacity of the Government of Southern Sudan at central, state, county and other levels to plan, manage and deliver basic education services, effectively and efficiently facilitating enrolment/retention, participation and quality learning."

The first job in each state was helping officials to set up structures and institutions to enroll more students in classes – one of the key targets in the Millennium Development Goals.

UNICEF also provided technical experts to help build up regional and state-specific databases of schools, students and teachers on the ground – the information management systems so badly needed – and helped the Government of Southern Sudan implement a teacher headcount, tracking down the exact location of teachers, their gender and their level of training.

- Providing special assistance for 50,000 girls from nomadic and returnees' communities to participate in life skills education activities.
- Continued support to strengthening of education systems and policies; including a baseline study of primary education in the northern states and the first teacher "headcount" in all ten states of Southern Sudan. UNICEF also assisted the Government of Southern Sudan to develop its Education Management Information System to ensure comprehensive data on schools, students and teachers is now available to planners, covering the last three years.