

The Crisis in  
**SOUTH SUDAN**

*Investing in education strengthens psychosocial recovery; promotes integration and peaceful coexistence; and builds a nation.*



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**SITUATION FOR CHILDREN**

The on-going crisis has aggravated an already difficult education situation in South Sudan, with low rates of enrolment, limited girls' participation in schooling and poor school infrastructure. Seven UNICEF partners have been affected by the recent upsurge in fighting in Upper Nile and Unity. About 42,700 children and adolescents lost access to learning, with an additional 10,000 children waiting to enroll in the planned temporary learning spaces also affected. This does not include the estimated 250,000 children that were out of school in affected areas before the fighting. To date, 33 schools are reportedly still used for military purposes. The provision of safe and protective learning spaces, trained and committed teachers, and basic education materials are essential to meet the immediate needs of children, adolescents and education personnel.

Fragile gains made in the provision of education services to children are at risk. Even before the current crisis, South Sudan had low education indicators including a national literacy rate of 27 per cent. There are very low rates of primary enrolment (42 per cent) and completion (10 per cent); low Early Childhood Development (ECD) access for aged 4-6 children (9 per cent); limited girls' participation in schooling (35 per cent); poor school infrastructure (50 per cent of schools without permanent/semi-permanent structures), erratic school supervision and weak monitoring of learning outcomes. Gender disparities in primary enrolments persist, with an average of 65 per cent of learners being male. Throughout the country, girls are more likely to be out-of-school than boys.

After years of steady progress, the overall primary enrollment has decreased by about one per cent each of the past three years according to the Education Information Management System. South Sudan's education system has been plagued by critical gaps including a lack of trained teachers (40 per cent); irregular salary payment; lack of classrooms, inadequate education supplies such as textbooks and stationery, and poor access to basic quality education. At this rate, extraordinary efforts are required for South Sudan to realize universal primary education (Millennium Development Goal 2) within the coming five years.

**Situation in Numbers:**

 **400,000**  
children forced out of school by conflict

 **70%**  
of schools in the three conflict-affected states non-functional

 **33**  
schools being used for military purposes

 **<10%**  
of children complete primary school

 **35%**  
of students are girls

*Back to Learning requirements across South Sudan in 2015:*

*Back to Learning funding received in 2015:*

**US\$ 42,000,000**

**US\$ 16,274,628**

## UNICEF & PARTNERS' RESULTS

**Access to education:** In 2015, under the **Back-to-Learning** Initiative, UNICEF and partners have provided 230,234 conflict-affected children with Education in Emergencies (EiE) services through the provision of technical assistance, supplies and operating costs to partners as well as through rapid response missions. UNICEF, as the Education Supply Pipeline Manager, is responsible for the procurement, prepositioning and distribution of education supplies for all Education Cluster partners. UNICEF and its partners are now focusing on continued retention of these children in schools as well as improving the quality of teaching and learning by regularly engaging with PTA members and strengthening teachers' skills to adopt learner-centred teaching methods. UNICEF will also work to increase participation of girls in learning, which stands at 35 per cent of total enrolment.

All states have now launched **Back-to-Learning** initiative. Education Officials from all ten states are identifying a list of 1,170 priorities schools, learning spaces and youth centres with the absorption capacity to enroll 'out of school' children and adolescents (aged 3-18) in the appropriate learning programmes, either early childhood centres, primary education or accelerated learning programmes.

Community mobilization is ongoing across these states to raise awareness on the right to education for all children using media and radio talk shows. Under **Back-to-Learning** initiative, vulnerable 'out of school' children in less affected states will also receive a package of quality education interventions including supplies, teacher training and psychosocial support, with UNICEF working to coordinate **Back-to-Learning** and other major education initiatives.

**Teacher training:** A total of 6,585 (26 per cent female) teachers, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members and other education personnel have been trained to support EiE. PTAs are especially crucial in hard to reach areas, as they are responsible for school management and upkeep, and mobilization of communities to send children, particularly girls to school. UNICEF and partners trained teachers on child-centred learning and inclusive education using core curriculum, life skills, conflict sensitive education, and provision of psychosocial support among other topics.

**Peace education:** UNICEF supported a national conference on "Promoting Learning Spaces as Zones of Peace: A Call for South Sudan" which resulted in a communique committing to support Learning Spaces as Zones of Peace (LSZoP) signed by the Ministers of Education and Culture, Youth and Sports as well as the Chairman of the Education Parliamentary Committee. The LSZoP communique supports the promotion of continuous learning and minimizing disruption of learning through vandalism or occupation.

**Global partnership for education:** Through community and school-based education service delivery under the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF supports the modelling of good practices in school construction, school WASH, school-community partnerships for effective school management and strengthened capacities of teachers to deliver quality education. In 2014, a jointly produced school design was approved by Ministry of Housing and will be used for construction of 25 model schools in five states from 2015 to 2016. Five of these schools are currently under construction.

**National curriculum:** On 8 September, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) with support from UNICEF and other education sector partners launched the first-ever comprehensive national education curriculum for South Sudan. The new South Sudan Curriculum is competency-based and integrates life skills and peace education, gender, human rights and environmental awareness. The curriculum includes academic and co-curricular activities to provide a variety of experiences for learners. The new curriculum is designed to systematically strengthen early literacy and numeracy and impart basic life skills that are important for peacebuilding (cooperation, tolerance, identity, appreciation cultural diversity, etc.). Prior to the launch of the national curriculum, there was no complete or comprehensive curricula in South Sudan. Some schools were using the South Sudan curriculum while others were using curricula from neighbouring countries. The new curriculum covers the whole basic education system including Early Childhood Development, Primary Education, Secondary Education and the Accelerated Learning Programme and Community Girls' Schools.

## UNICEF & Partners' Achievements in 2015:



### 230,234

children (aged 3-18) have access to education during the conflict



### 6,585

Teachers, other Education Personnel and Parent-Teacher Association members trained to support education in emergencies



### 445

classrooms established/rehabilitated



### 4,938

Children participating in Peace Forums and Peace Clubs in traditionally conflict-affected areas



Children attend Back to Learning launch in Wau Shilluk © UNICEF/2015/South Sudan

## CHALLENGES

The capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology remains limited to respond to the needs of children in conflict-affected areas, thus calling for a concerted effort from partners to support education service delivery. The capacity of NGOs providing frontline services needs to be strengthened if they are to continue to be actively engaged in quality education service delivery. Insecurity and heavy rains have slowed supply delivery to many affected areas, with heavy rains and wind also destroying Temporary Learning Spaces. Unpaid teachers and education facilitators are increasingly seeking alternative paid employment bringing education activities to a halt in many schools.

UNICEF seeks to expand its education response to adolescents to ensure that they do not join combatant groups. The creation and/or maintenance of safe and protective learning spaces for adolescents will support the delivery of humanitarian and psychosocial support, basic education, life skills and livelihood skills training, and conflict resolution skills geared toward mitigating conflict and supporting community recovery and healthy community relations.

UNICEF's education response provides safe and protective child-friendly learning spaces while mitigating children's vulnerability to being recruited into armed groups or being trafficked. It is also found to reduce the effects of trauma by offering children, teachers and other affected education personnel a sense of normality, structure and hope for the future. In the longer term, education provides more life opportunities, promotes conflict resolution and peacebuilding, tolerance, and respect for diversity and human rights and reduces girls' exposure to violence and abuse thus allowing them to fulfil their potential in life.

## FLAGSHIP: BACK TO LEARNING 2015

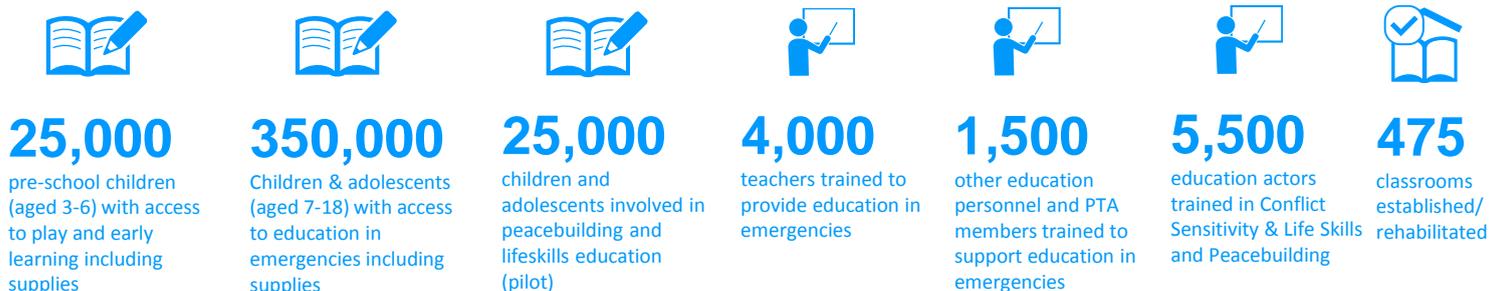
With conflict and displacement layered on top of extremely low education indicators, UNICEF is taking a dual track approach to ensuring that all children across South Sudan are able to access education in the start of the new school year. The 2014/15 **Back-to-Learning** initiative will deliver a comprehensive package of services – including learning spaces with gender-sensitive WASH facilities, teaching and learning supplies, teacher training and psychosocial support in conflict-affected states. UNICEF will reach out to IDP catchment areas away from PoCs where conflict-affected children flee with their families for safety, both in conflict affected areas as well as in other affected areas of Lakes, Warrap and Eastern Equatoria. Where possible, displaced children will be integrated into host community schools.

The provision of Conflict Sensitive Education and child-friendly, safe and protective learning spaces are essential protection measures, giving girls, boys and adolescents a safe space in the midst of increased risks of trauma, injury, exploitation and abuse. The provision of teaching and learning materials and teacher training will improve the quality of education. Quality education also provides awareness, knowledge and skills and empowers children and adolescents to safeguard their wellbeing through disseminating information about self-awareness, basic hygiene education, health care, safety, and prevention of separation of children from their families, prevention of violence against children including gender-based violence, disabilities, sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention.

In the remaining states, out-of-school children will be targeted with community-based mobilization interventions and improvements to the quality of education which will complement on-going capacity building and advocacy.

**Rapid Response Mechanism:** In hard to reach and contested areas, where no I/NGO partners are available, UNICEF undertakes direct implementation, including through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). For the RRM, UNICEF deploys education experts and dispatches supplies including Temporary Learning Space tents and basic teaching and learning supplies in order to quickly establish and/or rehabilitate existing learning spaces and distribute education supplies. Accompanying this support is the identification, mobilization and training of teachers and Parent-Teacher Association members as well as school registration to enable the quick start up and/or resumption of education activities.

## UNICEF & PARTNERS TARGETS FOR 2015



More information on the situation in South Sudan and UNICEF response, including the latest situation reports, can be found at [www.childrenofsouthsudan.info](http://www.childrenofsouthsudan.info)

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