



Education budget brief

South Sudan
2019–2020



My education, my future, my life

Introduction

The theme of the South Sudan education budget brief for the financial year (FY) 2019/20 is 'my education, my future, my life'. The theme aims to shift the nature of the budget brief from being not only a social sector budget analysis, but also to focus on how budget and policy decisions impact individual children. This, the second education budget brief, aims to explore the extent to which the approved estimates of national expenditure FY2019/20 address the education needs of children in South Sudan.

The main objective is to synthesize complex budget information so that it is easily understood by stakeholders and the public, and make practical recommendations that can inform better decision-making. This brief analyses the size and composition of approved budget allocations in FY2019/20 and offers insights into the efficiency, effectiveness, equity and adequacy of education spending.

The brief is based on a standardized budget brief methodology developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), allowing for comparison over time and year-on-year. It provides a rapid budget analysis including the socioeconomic context; an overview of the budget share allocated to education and other social sectors; trends in education spending; the composition of education spending; comments on budget credibility; and a snapshot of sources of education revenue.

Rapid budget analysis methodology does not endeavour to drill down to find explanations and causes on all issues. As such, this brief acts as a precursor to an education sector-specific Public Expenditure Review (PER) to serve as formative research to inform a subsequent Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) for the education sector, both of which will be conducted by UNICEF in 2021.

Logistical issues, primarily due to COVID-19 restrictions, delayed the timing of the budget brief until after the end of FY2019/20. However, the (unplanned) delay allows for anecdotal observations to be made on events which unfolded during the year, which is particularly useful due to the historical significance of 2019/20.



Key messages and recommendations

1. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan was commended for giving greater budget priority to the education sector in FY2018/19, at 9.4 per cent of the national budget. However, FY2019/20 contained a worrying reversal to just 5.5 per cent of the national budget.

Recommendation: The Government should stand by its indicative budget ceilings for FY2020/21, with an upward shift in education's share to 10.3 per cent, in line with the national target of 10 per cent, and moving towards the international target of 20 per cent.
2. Other social sectors remain severely underfunded. For example, only 1 per cent of the FY2019/20 national budget is allocated to health while there is no funding for child protection, social protection or water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Recommendation: The Government should continue to progressively increase the share of the budget directed to social sectors in line with international targets (e.g., 15 per cent of the national budget for health).
3. Education indicator values (coverage, access and equity) are very low, and enrolment at all education levels, particularly at the early childhood development and primary levels, is adversely affected by funding cuts caused by the ongoing socioeconomic and political challenges. Overall, there has been significant underspending within the education sector, and allocated funds are not received. Related analysis is recommended in the 2021 PER and PETS studies.

Recommendation: Funding shortfalls need to be urgently addressed so that the delivery of educational services can reach all children. Data is needed on funds received compared to actual expenditure, particularly at the subnational level, to support further analysis and insights into the observed spending variances. Budget performance must be stabilized to ensure more predictable and efficient service delivery.
4. Comparison across education levels reveals spending imbalances in favour of the primary (basic) education level, largely driven by recurrent and capital expenditures through the years. Much of this imbalance is likely driven by the resource and personnel costs associated with primary-level education.

Recommendation: Greater internal efficiency at primary level and more adequate funding at other levels can regulate the lack of symmetry. There is an urgent need for disaggregated expenditure in the sector to shed light on spending patterns and potential spending inefficiencies.
5. Erratic funding further impacts education provision. The flow of the recurrent budget, including salaries, is unpredictable due to liquidity issues, and the development budget has been very limited or non-existent. This has caused unintended consequences such as the imposition of school fees, which further limits educational opportunities for poor families, and months of arrears in unpaid teaching salaries.

Recommendation: Allocations for development and capital expenditure in education need to be increased, and funding flows for recurrent spending stabilized.
6. The education sector is too donor-dependent. The sector has received significant but unsustainable off-budget donor support, which is likely to decline.

Recommendation: Donors are strongly encouraged to move funding on-budget to strengthen planning and institutional capacity. The Government needs greater domestic financing allocations and more efficient budget execution supported by public financial management reforms.
7. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning completely stopped for children throughout the country, with many unable to access distance learning options, and girls particularly affected by loss of schooling. The low levels of attendance and poor education outcomes before the pandemic mean the current generation of children in South Sudan will experience a major setback in their well-being and rights.

Recommendation: The Government is encouraged to urgently step up its commitment to education to prevent reversals in gains made over recent years.

Section 1: Background and context



Around 90 per cent of the approximately 6.5 million children under 18 years¹ in South Sudan are growing up in households which battle to survive and experience multidimensional poverty.²

Children are more likely than not to be going to bed hungry, as 60 per cent of South Sudanese are classified as living with acute, livelihood-threatening food insecurity and 1.3 million children are malnourished.³ Most children (approximately 83 per cent) live in rural areas⁴ and their families' ability to survive on subsistence or small-scale farming has been severely negatively impacted by the ongoing civil conflict, poor or non-existent roads to remote areas, and the impact of extreme weather conditions.

The Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in September 2018, and the formation of the Revitalized Transnational Government of National Unity in February 2020 signalled hope for a brighter future for the children of South Sudan. The country's leaders promised an end to much of the civil war, improved services (including education and health) and improved food security. However, for some children the peace has not materialized as armed hostilities continue in several parts of the country and subnational conflict between formal and informal militias and youth groups is increasing in intensity and scale, including in Unity and Jonglei.

Since the start of the conflict, thousands of children have been recruited into armed

1 Author estimate from total population census reports and other statistical publications, including United Nations.

2 UNICEF South Sudan, Update of the Situation Analysis of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020, pending publication.

3 Ibid.

4 UNDP South Sudan, <www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/countryinfo.html>.

forces and groups, with some who have been released being as young as 8 years of age. Over 1.6 million of the 2.4 million refugees are children, and significant gaps exist in ensuring appropriate care for almost half of the 66,000 South Sudanese unaccompanied or separated children.⁵

Over half of all girls (51.5 per cent) are married or in union before the age of 18 years, and conflict-fuelled poverty and food insecurity are now considered to be the most common reasons for families to marry off their young daughters. Sexual and gender-based violence are at epidemic proportions.⁶

Child labour is found throughout South Sudan, especially in rural communities. Children in South Sudan work in farming activities, construction, restaurants and slaughterhouses, as well as touts in public transport and food stands, among others, and they are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including armed conflict, gold mining, brickmaking and cattle herding.⁷

Almost half of children in South Sudan are denied the right to basic education
Around 2.8 million school-aged children are not receiving an education.⁸ Different groups within South Sudan's population face unique challenges in terms of out-of-school children, including children living in conflict-affected and remote areas (including children of internally displaced persons), children with disabilities, child labourers, children in street situations, girls and pastoralists.

Children in pastoralist communities remain among the most marginalized, representing significant numbers of out-of-school children: at least 60 per cent of the South Sudanese are engaged in pastoralism.⁹

Poor learning outcomes

More than 70 per cent of primary-level teachers are untrained or underqualified. Teacher motivation in general is very low due to irregular and low pay, difficult working conditions with large classes and scarce equipment.¹⁰

Disruption to schooling also affects delivery of the curriculum, with both a short-term and a long-term impact on learning. In addition, closure of schools because of insecurity increases trauma and affects the morale of pupils, teachers and the community.¹¹

Two studies, the 2017 Montrose-led assessment and the 2019 Mott McDonalds-led assessment report, found that early grade learners in South Sudan were able to identify and distinguish between numbers reasonably well, but many had difficulty recognizing number patterns and performing basic mental addition and subtraction skills with automaticity.

In terms of literacy, the assessments found that literacy scores show weak foundations for reading, writing and understanding in English, and particularly in the national languages.

Many pupils arrive at school hungry and walk long distances to school. Only 1 in 4 children (24.7 per cent) report having eaten before school.¹²

Overview of education provision

In a series of seven focus group discussions facilitated by UNICEF and the Government with children and other stakeholders in South Sudan, education provision was strongly highlighted as an urgent need, especially by children themselves. Issues raised included accessibility and learning aids for children with disabilities, sexual abuse by

5 UNICEF South Sudan, Update of the Situation Analysis of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020, pending publication.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Montrose, *Assessment of Early Grade Learners in Literacy and Numeracy in South Sudan – Assessment 1*, Draft report for UNICEF, 18 August 2017.

12 UNICEF South Sudan, Update of the Situation Analysis of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020, pending publication.



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teachers, the rise of out-of-school children since COVID-19 (especially affecting girls, many of whom may now be pregnant), and a lack of books and reading materials for minds eager to learn.¹³

Schools

The 2020 Annual Education Census reveals there are around 5,400 schools – 591 pre-primary, 3,848 primary, 297 secondary and 646 alternative education system schools.¹⁴ Private schools include those run by faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and commercial providers. Faith-based schools are most common in Yei, Wau and Yambio.

Private schools are required to register with relevant authorities, to follow the national school curriculum, and to use English as the official language of instruction from primary Grade 4 onwards. In practice, Arabic instruction remains predominant in certain areas of the country.¹⁵

Thirty per cent of schools are damaged, destroyed, occupied by armed forces and armed groups or closed, and teachers have fled violence and economic stress. In the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, Government forces and armed groups occupied 161 educational institutions, and a further 800 educational

13 The focus group discussions were held in October–December 2020 with over 60 participants, including 25 children.

14 UNICEF South Sudan, Update of the Situation Analysis of Children and Women in South Sudan 2018–2020, pending publication.

15 Universal Management Group, Summative Global Partnership for education Country Programme Evaluation Batch 4, Country 9: Republic of South Sudan final evaluation report, May 2019.

institutions were targeted in attacks. Over 900 students and education personnel were harmed in attacks on education, including several hundred students who were abducted into armed groups from their schools.¹⁶

Policy frameworks for education

Education in South Sudan is organized into two ministries:

- The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), which provides quality education through to the secondary level for all children; and
- The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the aim of which is to produce highly skilled human capital that meets national and international standards.

The **General Education Act of 2012** provides the legal framework for education in South Sudan. Section 15 of the Act states that “the Government shall allocate an annual budget to the tune of 10 per cent of the total annual budget”.¹⁷ Further, the Incheon Declaration 2015 requires that at least 15–20 per cent of public expenditure be allocated to education.¹⁸

The Act prescribes “affirmative action”, i.e., giving preferential treatment to female learners or trainees, “to redress past and current discriminatory practices and beliefs”. In addition, it legislates “alternative education” in the form of courses of study to assist out-of-school learners (children and adults) to accelerate their learning by either joining the formal education system or by gaining needed skills through alternative learning or home-study for a productive life.

Evidence shows that these two components of the Act are translated into activities with

supporting budget lines, and target important aspects of the child’s right to education. It is recommended that they are analysed in the future PER and PETS studies. For example, the PER will explore the equity dimension in terms of geographic location, household socio-economic status and gender.

South Sudan Vision 2040,¹⁹ established at the dawn of the independent South Sudan, states that by 2040 South Sudan will have a quality education system that will prepare its youth to cope effectively with the global dynamic environment. The education system will be characterized by its relevance, quality and accessibility. South Sudan will have acquired the latest available information technology, capable of placing it firmly on the path to becoming a truly educated and informed nation.

The **South Sudan National Development Strategy 2018–2021**, which seeks to consolidate peace and stabilize the economy, contains Strategic Priority Action 5 which aims to “ensure institutional and human resource development” in support of this.²⁰

This is elaborated under the goal for the Social Services Cluster, which is to establish a robust, equitable social service system (in the education, health and social and humanitarian affairs sectors) and partnership that is sustainable and accountable. The strategic objective is “to empower youth to address unemployment challenges”. These broad-based statements are translated into a single education-related target: ‘Proportion of children completing primary education’ (baseline 64.4 per cent, 3-year target 30 per cent increase).

16 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Education Under Attack 2018*, <www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/eua_2018_full.pdf>.

17 Government of the Republic of South Sudan, General Education Act (Act 30) of 2012, Chapter V, Clause 15, <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/general_education_act_2012.pdf>.

18 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action 2015, <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf>.

19 Government of the Republic of South Sudan, *South Sudan Vision 2040: Towards freedom, equality, justice, peace and prosperity for all*, 2011.

20 South Sudan National Development Strategy 2018–2021: Consolidate peace and stabilize the economy, <www.mofep-grss.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NDS-4-Print-Sept-5-2018.pdf>.

Table 1: Select objectives and indicators, South Sudan General Education Strategic Plan, 2017–2022

Expressed as %	BASELINE			2018 TARGETS			2021 TARGETS		
	Average	Male	Female	Average	Male	Female	Average	Male	Female
Gross enrolment rate, ²³ early childhood development (3–5 years)	10	10	9	12	12	12	15	15	15
Gross enrolment rate, formal primary grades 1–8, including accelerated learning programmes, community girls’ schools and the pastoralist education programme	57	64	48	64	57	71	75	70	79
Gross enrolment rate, secondary education	7	4	8	8	6	10	11	8	13
% children with disabilities enrolled in primary education	1.7			2			17		

Source: General Education Strategic Plan

The **General Education Strategic Plan 2017–2022**²¹ has 23 key priorities, the first of which is to “ensure payment of salaries to all active ministry staff”. Anecdotal evidence is that late and non-payment of teachers in 2018–2020 was a recurring issue. This is a major concern, not only from a child rights perspective, but from a public financial management perspective, as it highlights major flaws in the country’s financial management, especially when coupled with the lack of a comprehensive register of teachers (another General Education Strategic Plan priority is to finalize and implement the teacher registration and verification process throughout the country).

Other staffing capacity issues in the General Education Strategic Plan include advocating for the re-deployment of teachers to underserved areas; ensuring all new teachers have the minimum teaching requirements; recruiting

volunteer teaching assistants to help with overcrowded classes; and reactivating teacher training institutions.

The provision of textbooks is included as a key priority, as are continuing to strengthen the education management system and the annual school survey process. From an equity and child right’s perspective, the plan includes an emphasis on improving the enrolment and retention of girls and children with disabilities; community-constructed classrooms, school feeding and school garden programmes for primary and secondary schools; and maintaining access to education for internally displaced persons and refugees. A national policy on inclusive education has been drafted but has not yet been signed by the Government.²²

Table 1 provides a summary of select objectives and indicators from the General Education Strategic Plan.

21 South Sudan Ministry of General Education and Instruction, General Education Strategic Plan, 2017–2022, Juba, Republic of South Sudan, May 2017, < http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/south_sudan_general_education_strategic_plan_2017-2022.pdf>.

22 Focus group discussions, October–December 2020.

23 The gross enrolment rate is the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.

The impact of COVID-19 on education

The FY2019/20 Budget was conceptualized and adopted without prior warning of the impact that COVID-19 would have on global and national socioeconomic conditions.

COVID-19 resulted in school closures throughout the country, escalating existing nutrition concerns as many children rely on school feeding programmes for their basic nutritional requirements. In South Sudan, school accessibility and attendance were already at a low rate prior to the pandemic. According to a mapping exercise of out-of-school children in 2020, at least 2.8 million school-aged children across the country were out of school prior to the onset of COVID-19.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning completely stopped for children throughout the

country, with many unable to access distance learning options. Girls have been particularly affected, as the closure of schools and restrictions put in place have increased exposure of girls and women to gender-based violence, including child marriage and rape.²⁴ Resulting pregnancies may see girls never return to school.

Noting the low levels of attendance and poor education outcomes before the pandemic, as well as anecdotal information that payments to civil servants, including teachers, as well as grants and transfers to states stopped in March/April 2020, the current generation of children in South Sudan will experience a major setback in their well-being and rights, from an educational, nutritional, protection and economic perspective.

24 UNICEF, *UNICEF Response in South Sudan: Threats to child rights – Overcoming the impact of COVID-19 in a context of chronic vulnerabilities and dire humanitarian needs*, May 2020.



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Section 2: Education spending trends



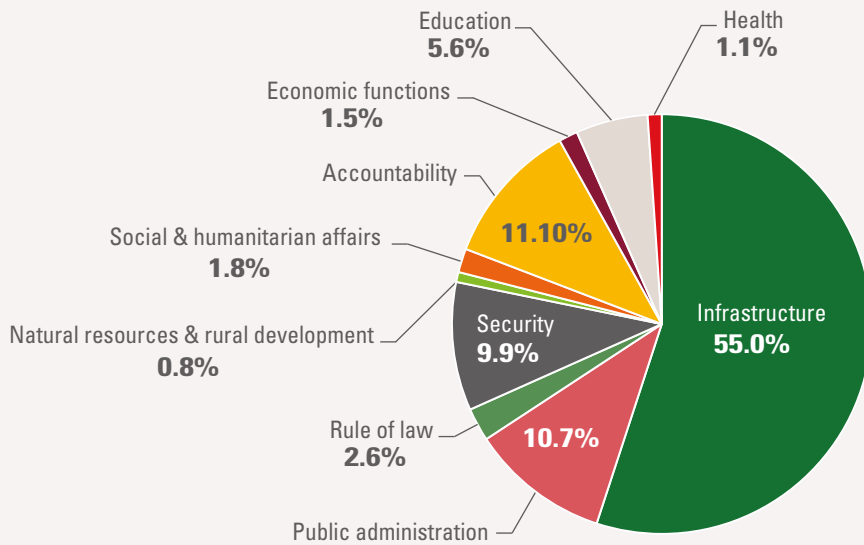
Sector allocations

In FY2018/19 the Government came close to its own 10 per cent target by allocating a 9.4 per cent share of spending to the education sector. FY2019/20, however, saw a reversal of the gains made with the education budget share falling to 5.5 per cent (see *Figure 1*). The indicative budget ceilings

for FY2020/21 once again show the commitment to achieve national targets, with an upward shift in education's share to 10.3 per cent.

In light of the myriad socioeconomic challenges facing South Sudan, it is significant that

Figure 1: South Sudan allocations by sector, FY2019/20 (as percentage of total budget)



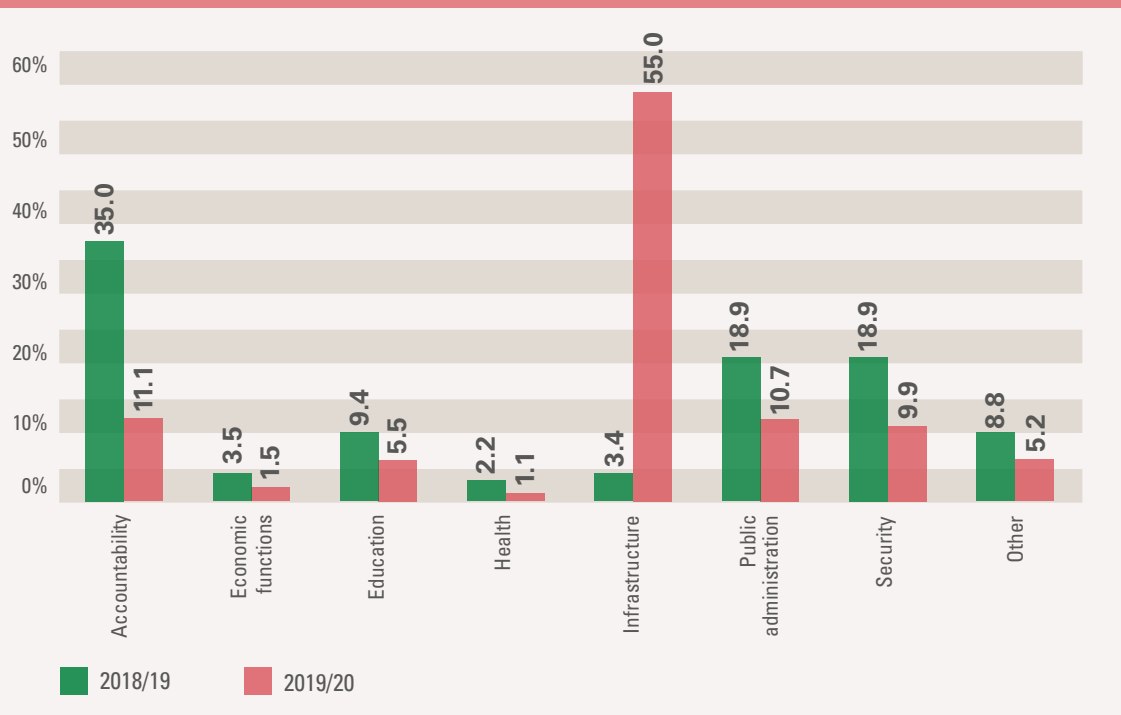
Source: Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP), Budget Book FY2019/20

the education sector received the fourth largest share of the FY2019/20 Budget. Accountability and public administration each received the largest shares, at 11 per cent, followed by security at 10 per cent.

The average education sector share over a seven-year period (FY2013/14–2019/20) is 4.5

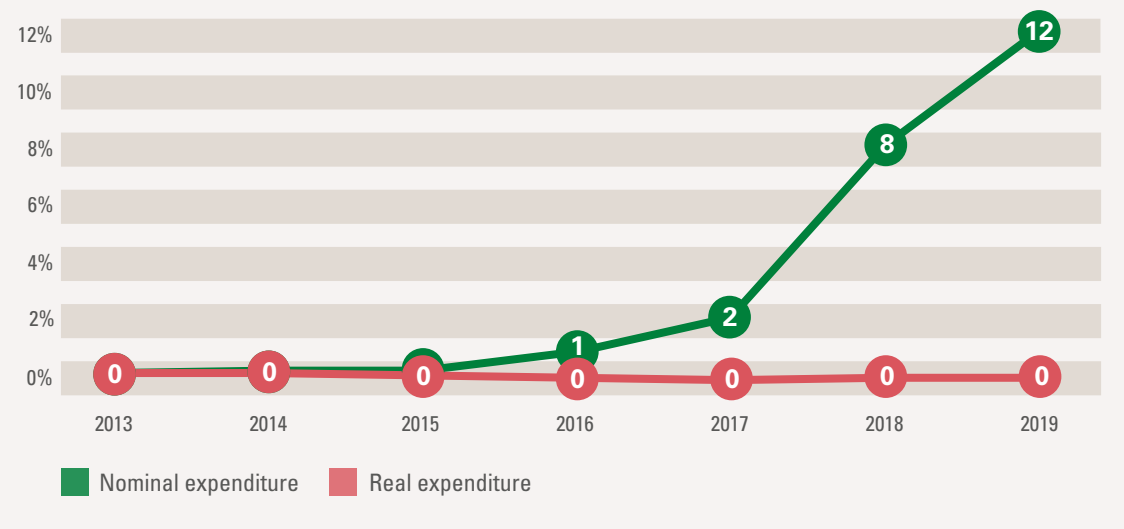
per cent. This average is set to increase with the proposed FY2019/20 allocation. However, it remains considerably lower than the 10 per cent threshold set by the General Education Strategic Plan. The funding situation in the education sector is critical due to a dire shortage of teachers, partly due to staff leaving as a result of unpaid salaries.

Figure 2: Sector investment trends, FY2018/19–2019/20



Source: MoFP, Budget Book FY2019/20

Figure 3: Education sector spending trends, nominal vs. real percentage increase, FY2013/14–2019/20



Source: MoFP, Budget Book FY2019/20

The collective social sector allocation decreased from an 11 per cent share in FY2018/19 to an 8.5 per cent share in FY2019/20. In addition to the reduction to education, the health share halved, leaving it with a budget share of just 1 per cent.

There continues to be no funding for child protection or water, sanitation and hygiene services. However, the social and humanitarian affairs sector share increased six-fold from 0.28 per cent to 1.83 per cent in FY2019/20, which is a positive trend in light of the Government's commitment to allocating 1 per cent of its annual budget to finance the National Social Protection Policy Framework through the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

Economic classifications indicate that wages and salaries comprise over 80 per cent of allocations, with approximately 9 per cent allocated to other recurrent costs, and 6–7 per cent to domestic and foreign development.

Functional spending indicates the purpose for which funds are allocated. Figure 2 depicts how funds are finite and an increase in one area requires a decrease in another.

Nominal vs. real allocations to education

The nominal budget allocation to education increased by 51 per cent in FY2018/19–2019/20 (see Figure 3). This follows a fairly steady trend of a nominal 40 per cent increase in FY2013/14–2017/18.

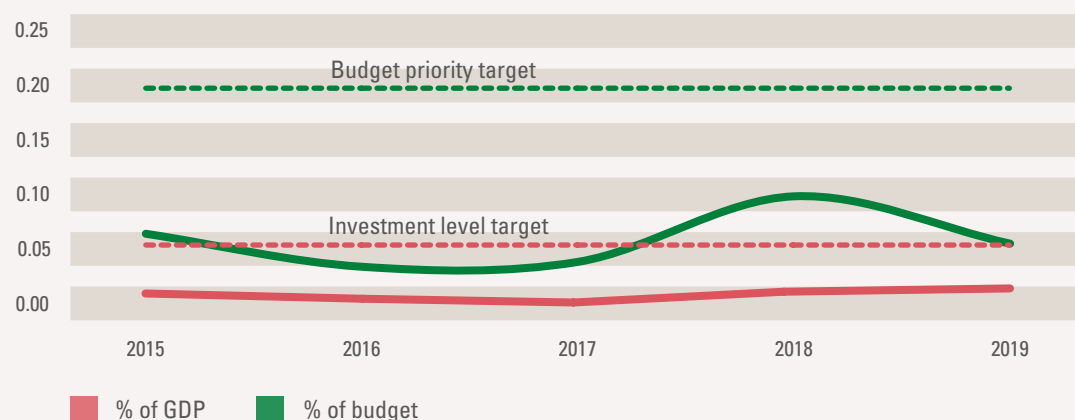
When adjusted for inflation, real education expenditure declined at an average 0.4 per cent in FY2015/16–2017/18 and stood at 1 per cent real growth in FY2018/19–2019/20.

The low level of spending on education is evident in the literacy rates in South Sudan. In 2016, only 40 per cent of South Sudanese reported that they could read and write, placing South Sudan as having one of the lowest literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa and in the world.²⁵

Government expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product

After peaking at 9.4 per cent of the Government budget and 1.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in FY2018/19, education declined to 5.5 per cent of the Government budget, which translated to 1.7 per cent of GDP (see Figure 4). This follows a fairly steady trend of a nominal 40 per cent increase in FY2013/14–2017/18.

Figure 4: Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP



Source: MoFP, Budget Book FY2019/20



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Key takeaways: Education spending trends

- While the indicative budget ceilings for FY2020/21 contain an education share of 10.3 per cent, FY2019/20 contained a worrying reversal to just 5.5 per cent of the national budget.
- Although the nominal budget allocation to education increased by 51 per cent in FY2018/19–2019/20, this proportion in real terms remains insufficient to meet the vision and challenges of the sector.
- South Sudan's spending on the education sector is one of the lowest in East Africa and falls short of both national and international targets, which must be met to reach Sustainable Development Goal 4.

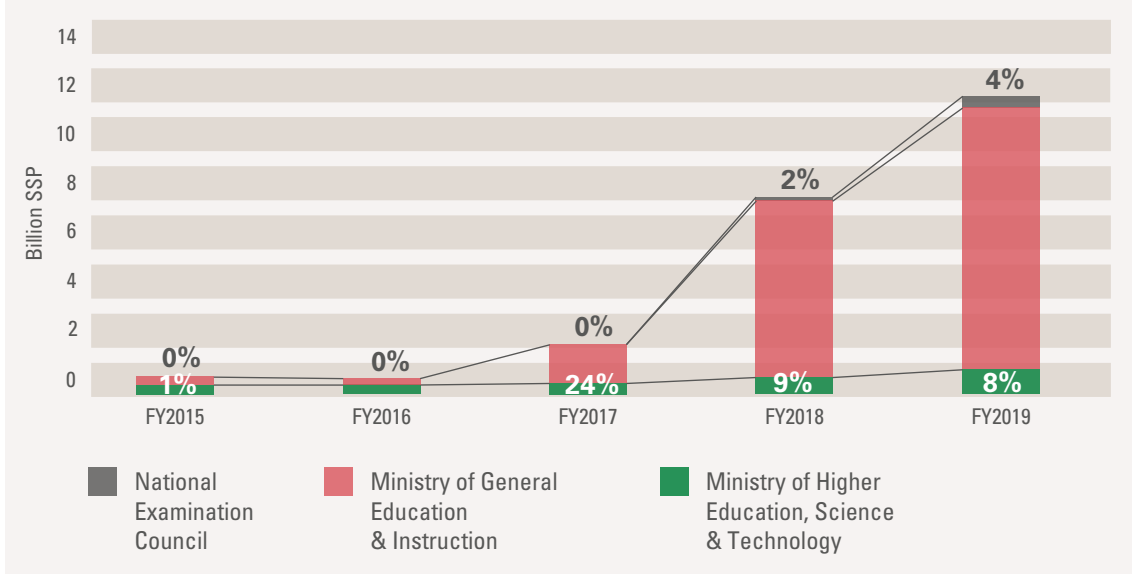
Section 3: Composition of education spending



From 2017 onwards, the MoGEI received the lion's share of the education sector budget, averaging over 85 per cent, followed by 5–9 per cent allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and 2–4 per cent to the National Examination Council (see Figure 5). On average, over 85 per cent of the sector budget has been allocated to national government over the previous four years. However, in FY2019/20 the allocation to national government dropped to 75 per cent, with the sub-national allocation increasing to 25 per cent (Figure 6).

The bulk of expenditure by the MoGEI and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology for the period 2013/14–2017/18²⁶ is associated with recurrent costs incurred at national and subnational levels. Capital or development expenditure for the education sector has been virtually non-existent due to

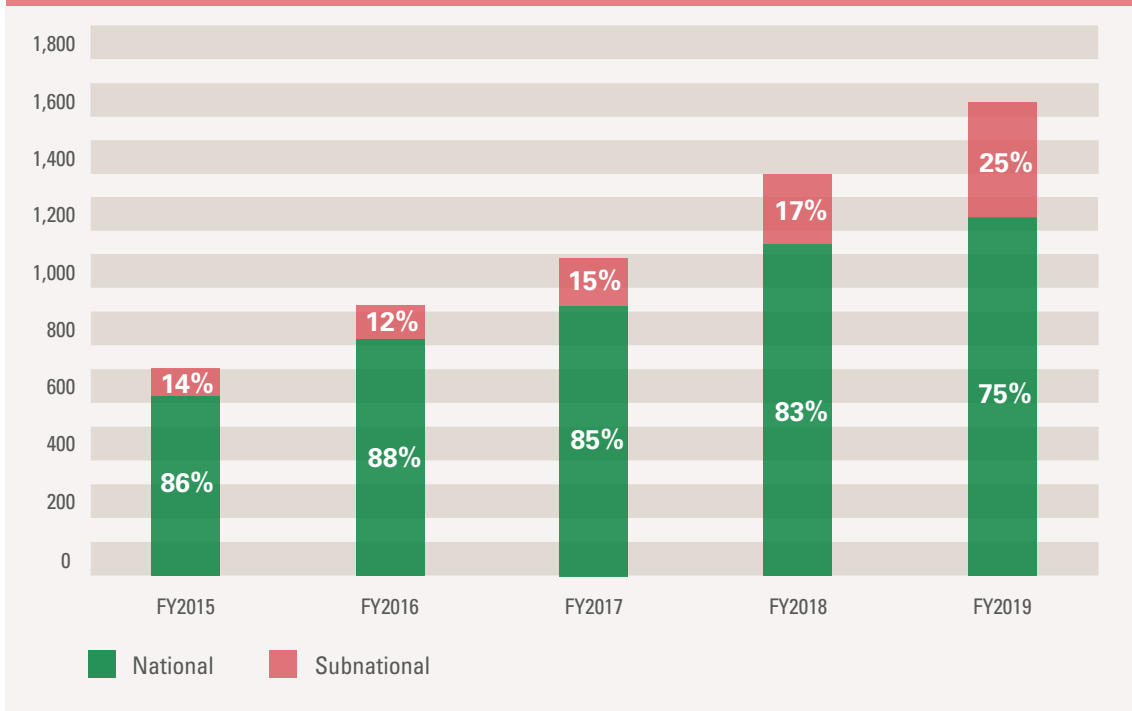
Figure 5: Ministry allocations as a share of the education sector budget, FY2015/16–2019/20, SSP and percentage



Source: MoFP, Budget Book FY2019/20

²⁶ There are limitations in obtaining more recent data due to the delayed budget process. Information from MoGEI, Education Budget Brief South Sudan, 2019.

Figure 6: Share of education sector budget by sphere of government, FY2015/16–2019/20, SSP and percentage



Source: MoFP, Budget Book FY2019/20

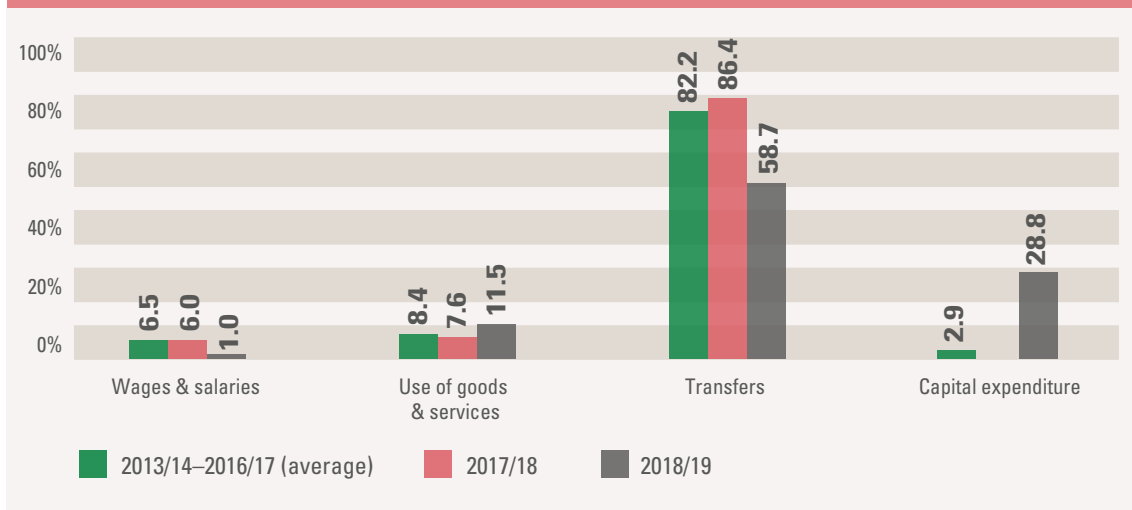
funding priorities of the Government. Public funds for development were mostly spent by the Presidency, National Legislative Assembly and Ministry of Transport.

Subnational governments receive around 90–100 per cent of their revenue from national government, through a number of grant mechanisms. In the period 2013/14–2017/18, close to

85 per cent of MoGEI spending was recorded against wages, salaries and transfers to sub-national structures and schools (see Figure 7).

These aggregate recurrent costs as a proportion of the overall budget exceed the international standard of 80 per cent. The marked increase in the proportion of transfers vis-à-vis other categories could result in significant

Figure 7: MoGEI budget composition comparison by economic classification, FY2013/14–2018/19



Source: Budget Books, MoFP; MoGEI, Education Budget Brief South Sudan, 2019



leakages if spending discretion is not closely tracked.

Subnational transfers

The MoGEI county transfers include salary, operations and service delivery. The operating transfers support the county education departments, the payam education offices and the county education centres. The transfers to service delivery units (schools) include capitation grants for primary schools,²⁷ which are disbursed to facilitate basic school running costs. These costs include stationery and school supplies, maintenance and repair, extra-curricular activities and transport. Transfers do not cater for non-teaching staff.

The state salary, operating and service delivery transfers are disbursed to facilitate post-primary education. Operating transfers enable the states to provide oversight, coordination and dissemination of policy

for education delivery at the county level. Service delivery unit transfers include teacher incentives to secondary schools. In FY2018/19, however, the MoGEI included early childhood development; technical and vocational education and training; and teacher training institute teacher incentive transfers in its budget.

Communities shoulder the burden caused by underfunding

The community contribution to supporting education remains significant. The current budget structure of the sector still does not provide sufficient resources for non-personnel items such as minor repairs and regular maintenance; scholastic materials; teaching aids for the schools and related basic school equipment; school furniture; and associated consumables. Direct costs for scholastic materials, transport and feeding of learners are, by and large, shouldered by parents and communities across the country.²⁸

²⁷ Capitation grants allocate a fixed amount of money per student and are based on the number of recognized pupils enrolled in a school.
²⁸ MoGEI, Education Budget Brief South Sudan, 2019.



Although pre-primary and primary education is free, the MoGEI estimates parents spent 38,560 South Sudanese pounds (SSP) on a pre-primary pupil per annum, and SSP 68,110 and SSP 65,650 respectively on a primary pupil and

secondary pupil per annum. This suggests that communities, particularly those affected by the conflict, are heavily burdened with the costs of education. Girls may suffer as boys are prioritized for education when there are limited funds.²⁹

²⁹ Ibid.

Key takeaways: Composition of education spending

- **The bulk of sector funds are currently used for recurrent costs such as wages, salaries and transfers.**
- **Capital or development budget has been almost non-existent in recent years due to competing Government priorities, although the FY2018/19 budget did provide for this budget category.**
- **Parents and communities shoulder a significant cost burden to enrol and keep their children in school.**

Section 4: Spending by level of education

The period 2013/14–2018/19³⁰ saw a marked variation of spending across education subsectors. Comparisons across education levels over the last several years revealed spending imbalances in favour of the primary (basic) education level (see Figure 8). Much of this imbalance is likely driven by the resource and personnel costs associated with primary-level education.

However, greater internal efficiency at primary level and more adequate funding at other levels can regulate the lack of symmetry between levels.

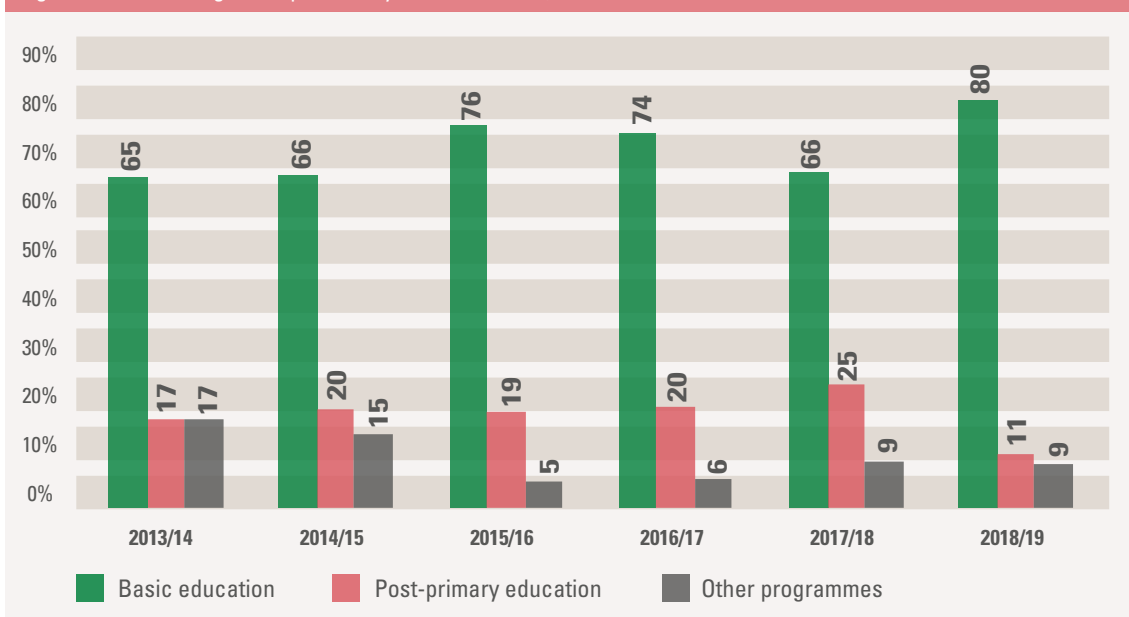
Spending per pupil is historically less than the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) average. There is limited data on multi-year government funding patterns per student, but available data from 2016 shows spending per student of 3.9 United States



dollars (US\$) at pre-primary level, US\$46.6 at primary level, US\$50.6 at lower secondary level and US\$256.9 at upper secondary level. This is less than the ESAR average at these same levels (see Figure 9). It should be noted that there was no tertiary-level data available for South Sudan, but the ESAR tertiary average was US\$3,184.1 per student.

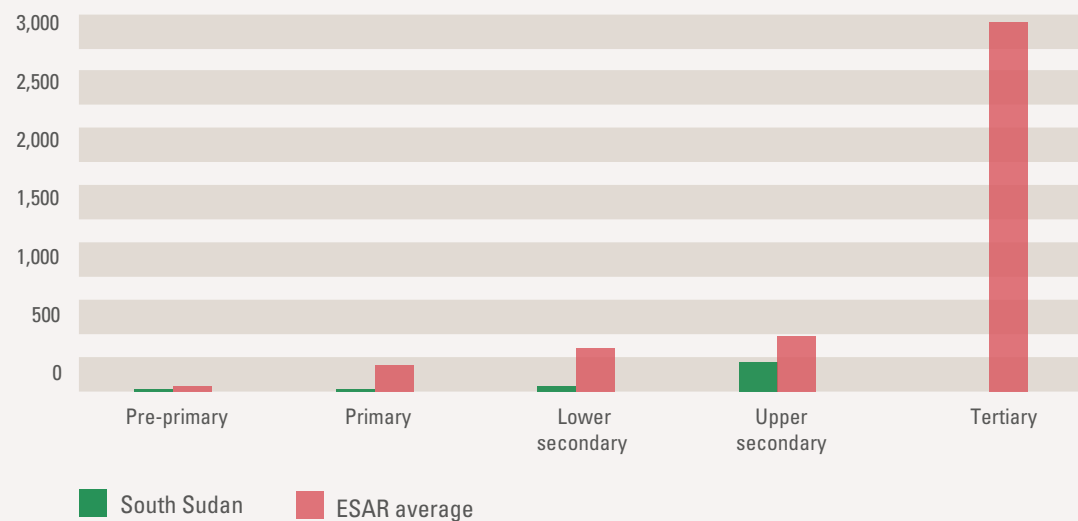
³⁰ There are limitations in obtaining more recent data due to the delayed budget process.

Figure 8: MoGEI budget composition by education level, FY2013/14–2018/19



Source: Source: Budget Books, MoFP; MoGEI, Education Budget Brief South Sudan, 2019

Figure 9: Initial Government funding per student in current US\$, FY2013/14–2016/17



Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); UNESCO Institute of Statistics; MoGEI, Education Budget Brief South Sudan, 2019.

Note: Data on South Sudan is from 2016, except for tertiary education, which was not available.



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Key takeaways:

Spending by level of education

- > There are clear imbalances in spending across levels of education.
- > There is an urgent need for disaggregated expenditure in the sector to shed light on spending patterns and potential spending inefficiencies.
- > Budgetary support to and prioritization of critical education areas, such as the early childhood development subsector, is insufficient.

Section 5: Budget credibility and execution



The World Bank reported that in the third quarter of FY2018/19 budget execution differed significantly across sectors.³¹

While the security sector was allocated a 19 per cent share of the national budget, it received a 41 per cent share in the first nine months of the fiscal year. Conversely, the education sector, which had been allocated a 9.4 per cent share of the total budget, had only received 2.4 per cent in the same period. The social and humanitarian affairs sector was the only other sector to receive more than its budget share, with an expenditure share of 6.5 per cent, compared to its budget allocation of 0.28 per cent.

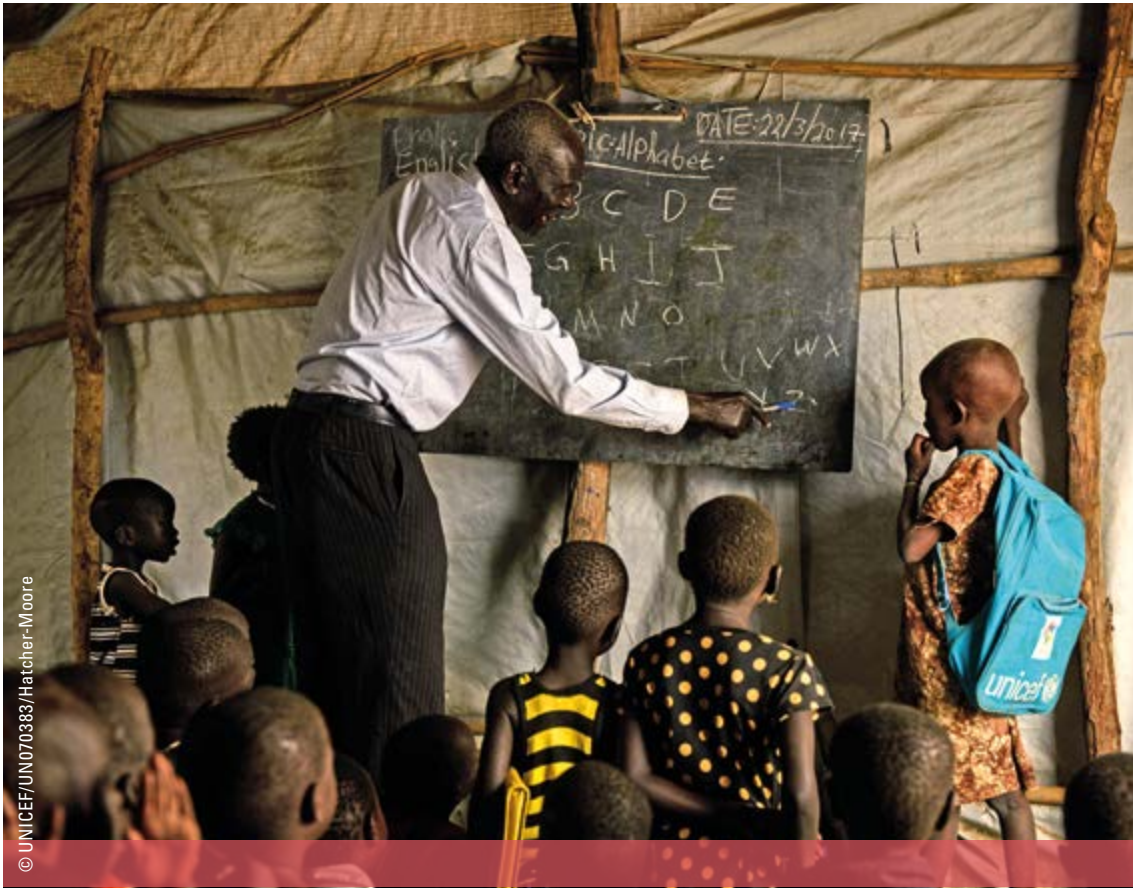
In addition to divergences in budget and funds received, the World Bank reported actual budget expenditure (outturns) in the first nine months of FY2018/19 for the education sector

of 28 per cent, implying less than one third of the budget had been spent. Other sectors' execution rates were also reported as low, with health at 22 per cent, infrastructure at 27 per cent and rural development at 42 per cent. The World Bank also observed that by the end of FY2018/19 civil service salaries were in arrears by up to 14 months.³²

South Sudan scores low on the Open Budget Survey, which measures public access to information. In 2019, the country was awarded a transparency index of 7/100 denoting 'scant budget information'. While this is a 2 per cent improvement from 2017, it is still low by regional standards with Uganda at 58, Kenya at 50, Rwanda at 39 and Tanzania at 17. The South Sudan score of 7 ranks it 106 of 117 countries, topping Burundi (6), Somalia (3), Sudan (2) and Comoros (0).

³¹ World Bank, *South Sudan Economic Update: Poverty and vulnerability in a fragile environment*, 2020.

³² Ibid.



The 2021 Education PER will analyse current trends and processes in budget planning, public expenditures and outcomes in order to help the MoGEI set priorities and make decisions on resource allocation, utilization, efficiencies and management, and achieve learning goals against a backdrop of serious economic and political challenges. The PETS is a quantitative survey of the

supply side of public services. The unit of observation is typically a service facility and/or local government, i.e., frontline providers such as schools. Experience to date shows that PETS in education can help countries significantly reduce resource leakages from administrative inefficiencies. It can also help assess incentives and performance at the school level.

Key takeaways: Budget credibility and execution

- **Budget performance must be stabilized to ensure more predictable and efficient service delivery.**
- **There is an urgent need to identify and address the prevailing budget execution challenges across all levels and geographical locations.**
- **In 2021, the PER and PETS will help uncover bottlenecks and inform improvement of resource flows and expenditure execution.**

Section 6: Financing the education sector

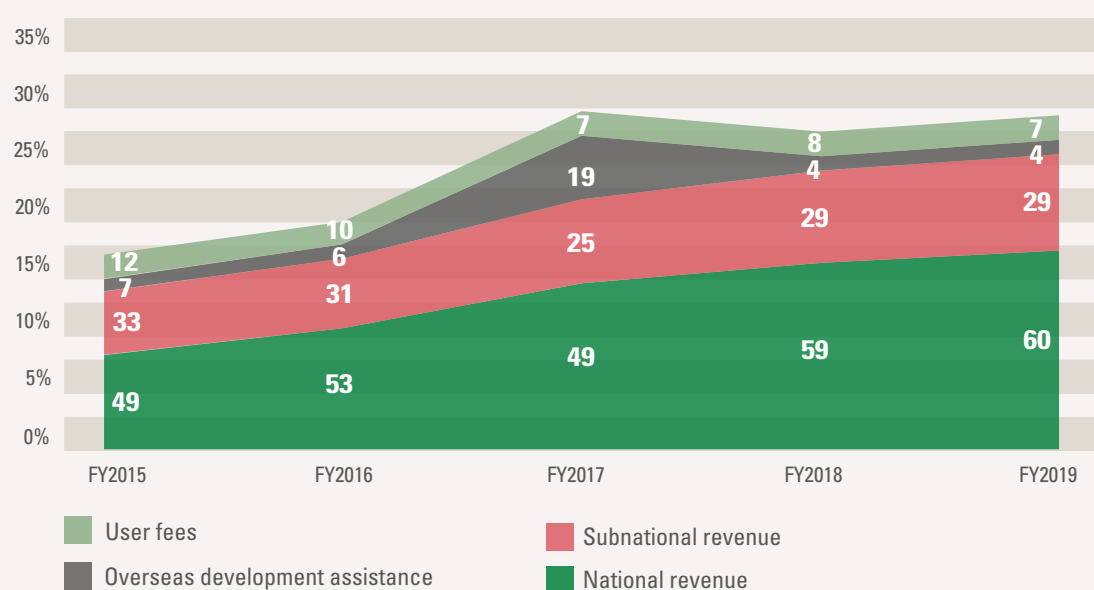


In FY2019/20, approximately 60 per cent of the education sector budget is covered by national revenue sources, 29 per cent from subnational resources, 4 per cent from overseas development assistance and 7 per cent from user fees. Although the General Education Act 2012 legislates free basic education, some schools may charge registration fees.

The on-budget overseas development assistance masks the off-budget donor support to the education sector, which was estimated in FY2017/18 to amount to US\$93 million, approximately eight times the amount of the government’s contribution.³³

Trends in FY2015/16–2019/20 indicate a steady increase in national revenue, with decreases in other funding sources (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Trends in financing the education sector, FY2015/16–2019/20



Source: Budget Books, MoFP

³³ UNICEF, Republic of South Sudan Education Budget Brief, 2019.



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Key takeaways:

Financing the education sector

- **The financing needs of the sector are massive – infrastructure, capacity-building, salary support, school and cash grants – requiring a short- to medium-term strategy optimizing use of on-budget and off-budget funds.**
- **Donor funding is unsustainable – the Government needs greater domestic financing allocations and more efficient budget execution to replace dwindling funds from the international community.**
- **In the meantime, donors are strongly encouraged to move funding on budget to strengthen planning capacity and education systems.**

**Prepared by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction,
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