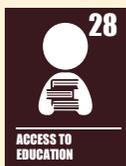


The situation



There are 2.8 million out of school children in South Sudan, representing almost 3 in 5 children. Those particularly at risk of being excluded include girls subject to child marriage, children with disabilities and children forced to work or live in the streets.

What we want to see

Barriers to education such as school fees, lack of schools, and poor sanitation facilities in schools, especially for girls need to be overcome. South Sudan needs a cadre of qualified and regularly paid teachers.

How together we can make it happen

UNICEF is advocating for the Government to invest more in education, through its national budget. Parents are learning to see the value in sending children to school, especially girls and children with disabilities. When children learn and flourish, their families and communities thrive too.

“ There are millions of children out of school. Parents are poor and cannot afford to send children to school. So, children go on the street as they need to make money to survive. – Boy aged 15 ”

The situation



Children with disabilities face exclusion, stigma and name-calling. And yet disability is more common than you may think. Many children are traumatized by the war and living in fear, and untreated mental health conditions are a major contributor to disability in South Sudan.

What we want to see

Disability is only “disabling” if children with disabilities face stigma and discrimination, and are unsupported. Children need to be included, have assistive devices for movement, learning and communication, receive mental health and psychosocial support, and be welcomed into their families and communities as active and contributory members.

How together we can make it happen

UNICEF is urging the Government to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to ensure that the needs of children with disabilities – from health to education – are universally met.

The situation



Justice professionals – police, prosecutors, lawyers and judges – lack the specialized training to support child survivors, victims, witnesses or alleged offenders. Many may not understand the vulnerabilities girls face when coming into contact with justice systems.

What we want to see

Justice systems need to protect and support children who have experienced violence and other rights violations – as well as those who have witnessed a crime. Juvenile detainees need to be separated from adult prisoners and a separate court for juvenile defendants needs to be operational.

How together we can make it happen

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an unforeseen opportunity, resulting in 148 children being released from detention, and training on children in conflict with the law for 67 justice organizations. This will have an ongoing impact in supporting the release of more children into community-based rehabilitation programmes.

The situation



Unique groups of children in South Sudan confront extreme stressors including as victims of displacement and refugees; those living in conflict-affected and remote areas; children associated with armed groups; children on the street; children with disabilities; girls at risk of child marriage; child labourers; and pastoralists.

What we want to see

For all children to have their rights fulfilled, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are younger or older, rich or poor.

How together we can make it happen

By teaching all children in adults in South Sudan about the importance of child rights. The fulfilment of children’s rights is not only good for children, it is good for South Sudan, for they are tomorrow’s leaders; today’s inspiration.

This pocket guide gives a summary of highlights from a full length 200-page Situation Analysis. For the full report, published July 2021, please visit

<https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/reports>

THE SITUATION OF Children AND Women IN SOUTH SUDAN

“ Time is needed for things to change in South Sudan. Children and local communities can play their part, through unity and connection. – Girl aged 15 ”



Child rights in South Sudan

About the Situation of Children and Women in South Sudan

This leaflet gives you a snapshot of the full length 200-page Situation Analysis, published in July 2021. The report provides all stakeholders working for children and child rights in South Sudan, with a rich resource detailing every aspect of children's lives – the barriers to their flourishing; the children most left behind; the progress so far; and the opportunities for enhancing children's rights and well-being.

What are child rights and why do they matter?

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status are. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere in the world are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. In this leaflet we look at some of the articles and their status in South Sudan.

“ Child marriage is a common problem. Steps are being taken to reduce school dropouts among girls, but their number is on the rise. We will not have women as future leaders if they are married as girls and they cannot go to school. – Girl aged 17 ”



The situation



Traditional attitudes towards children and their role in society are a barrier to substantive child participation in South Sudan.

Negative attitudes towards children with disabilities hinder their participation in social, political and economic life and there is a lack of participation of girls in decision-making in the family and community.

What we want to see

Children and young people can play a positive, transformative role, especially in peace building and decision-making processes.

How together we can make it happen

Children played an important part in consultations for the Situation Analysis. They did this through the UNICEF Child Reporters Programme, which ensures that the voices of children are heard and guide decisions that are taken to improve the well-being of children and the respect of their rights.

“ The next generation is a generation of change. We will change society and help the country. – Girl aged 17 ”

The situation



One in 10 children die before their 5th birthday. Preventable diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia are responsible for 75% of all child deaths.

Children make up almost half of the population of 13.2 million, but over a million children suffer from acute malnutrition.

What we want to see

The uptake of vaccination services is improving so that children will no longer die from preventable diseases. Improved water, sanitation and hygiene will support nutrition, so that children are not vulnerable to diarrhoea and malnutrition.

How together we can make it happen

UNICEF in collaboration with the Government and partners is initiating a paradigm shift to address wasting in children. That means moving away from primarily treating children suffering from acute malnutrition, to a focus on reduction of malnutrition combined with treatment.

The situation



Only 35% of children under five have their birth registered. Without a birth certificate children are invisible to the South Sudan Government. This means they may miss out on essential programmes – like child protection, health care and education – that help secure their most fundamental rights.

What we want to see

A great step forward is the Civil Registry Act 2018, which is now a law in South Sudan and paves the way for all children to be registered and receive their birth certificates.

How together we can make it happen

Digitalization of birth notifications via mobile phones means more children are being reached. However, birth notification is just the first stage, and more children need to receive paper copies of their birth certificates which they can keep for life.

“ From 8 pm to 5 am you cannot go out as you will be killed or injured. Girls are taken and raped. If you care about your life you stay home. The insecurity really affects our lives as children. – Boy aged 13 ”

The situation



Children in South Sudan are subject to high levels of conflict-related violence.

Girls face higher vulnerability to sexual violence, and boys are more at risk of recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups. Over half of girls are married before they are 18 – i.e. while still children.

What we want to see

All children have a right to be free from violence – in the home, in school, and in their communities. This includes freedom from emotional abuse (such as name calling) as well as physical abuse and punishment.

How together we can make it happen

There need to be clear systems for prevention, protection and response from all forms of violence, for all children. Families, communities, teachers and parties to the conflict need to know that violence against children is not acceptable, and breaches international law as well as South Sudan's own Child Act 2008.