



UNICEF SUDAN

EDUCATION 2020

EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
SITUATION IN SUDAN	5
RESULTS	9
PARTNERSHIPS	13
CHALLENGES	14
LESSONS LEARNED	14
FUTURE WORK PLAN	15
STORY: BRINGING EDUCATION SUPPLIES TO JEBEL MARRA FOR FIRST TIME IN A DECADE	16
EXPRESSION OF THANKS	18
FEEDBACK FORM	18
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS	19

Cover photo: a boy poses with his new school bag in a UNICEF-supported school in Bentiu informal settlement for South Sudanese refugees in Khartoum.

ACRONYMS

ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
C4D	Communication for Development
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWTL	Can't Wait to Learn (e-learning project)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Project (EU-funded project)
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HAC	Humanitarian Action for Children
HDI	Human Development Index
HNO	Human Needs Overview
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCLAE	National Council for Literacy and Adult Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
ORE	Other Resources Emergency (emergency thematic funding)
ORR	Other Resources Regular (thematic funding)
PTA	Outpatient Therapeutic Programme
RR	Regular Resources
S3M	Simple Spatial Survey Method
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals (or Sudanese Pound)
SIP	School Improvement Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A year after the start of the political transition and the signing of a peace agreement, humanitarian needs continue to rise across the country. These needs are primarily driven by poverty, conflict and climate change, and are exacerbated by decades long underdevelopment. The Sudan 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) points to 12.7 million people – 28 per cent of the population – in need of humanitarian assistance throughout 2021. This is 3.4 million people more compared to 2020.

Approximately three million school-age children (around one third of the school-aged population; children between six and thirteen years) do not go to school. There are high disparities between the eighteen states in Sudan. The most vulnerable groups are girls, children affected by conflict, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), children in rural areas, and children from poor households. In addition, there are high drop-out rates, especially for girls and children living in rural areas.

Due to the impact and implications of COVID-19, only 30,577 previously out-of-school children (47 per cent of which were girls), including emergency-affected children and refugees, enrolled in schools, alternative learning programme (ALP) centres, and e-learning with UNICEF support, before the schools and other learning opportunities closed in March 2020. However, the progress achieved prior to the closure of schools, was the result of the establishment of gender-responsive learning spaces, provision of learning supplies, ‘come to school’ and community sensitisation campaigns and teacher trainings. Of the total number of children reached, 13,547 (51 per cent girls) previously out-of-school children were enrolled in alternative learning programme (ALP) centres.

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on the education sector, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in the development of a sector response plan, which includes measures for continuity of learning, student safety, and psychosocial well-being. The Ministry of Education in Sudan, with UNICEF support, also developed protocols for running safe operations in schools amid COVID-19, the renovation of water and sanitation facilities at schools, and provided supplies (face masks and tents) to ensure safety and wellbeing of students and education stakeholders upon school reopening.

As a result of UNICEF’s support, 214,222 students were able to continue their learning through access to review lessons for Grade 8 and Grade 11 through remote learning. Dedicated sessions were also prepared and disseminated in sign language for 512 children with hearing impairments. In addition, 30,577 previously out-of-school children (47 per cent girls) accessed formal and non-formal education and 203,253 emergency-affected children received adequate educational materials. This work resulted in the provision of remote learning opportunities to more than 200,000 students, through radio, television, and booklets. Despite the efforts, the national primary education examinations (at 8 Grade level) noted a deterioration in learning outcomes from 2019.

In cooperation with UNICEF’s Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional office, UNICEF Sudan contextualised and delivered teacher training in preparation for school reopening, resulting in strengthened capacity of teachers to deliver lessons in the emerging context.

In 2021, UNICEF’s education team will pursue the following planned results as defined in the country programme and articulated in the annual work plan for 2021:

UNICEF will continue its role as chair of the education sector, providing overall technical and coordination support to the overall sector, as well as coordinating agent of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funding.

- Support out-of-school children, especially girls and those in the most vulnerable situations and emergency-affected children, to access quality pre-primary, primary and alternative learning opportunities with UNICEF support.
- Improve the quality of education through teacher training and capacity development, strengthened learning environments, especially for girls, and advance access to quality early learning programmes.

Given that 65 per cent of the Sudanese population are under 25 years of age, getting things right for children, adolescents and youth in the immediate and longer term, will to a great degree determine how successful Sudan will be in the future. Urgent action is needed to make a critical difference in the most vulnerable children's lives in the next months, and years to come.

SITUATION IN SUDAN

Sudan is the third largest country in Africa occupying approximately 1.9 million square kilometres (almost half the size of the European Union) and is home for a rapidly growing population of 41 million people. More than half of Sudan's population are children. Spurred by a high population growth of 2.4 per cent, Sudan is experiencing a demographic shift towards a youth-based population. However, limited livelihood opportunities exist for youth, resulting in an increased risk of militarisation and recruitment of unemployed adolescents and youth into militias as well as in temporary and permanent migration within Sudan but also increasingly beyond its borders

Bordering some of East Africa's most unstable countries, Sudan receives high numbers of refugees from neighbouring Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, Central African Republic and South Sudan. At the beginning of 2021, Sudan hosted more than one million refugees and asylum seekers, including more than 810,000 South Sudanese refugees; the second largest figure in the region (after Uganda)¹ as well as some 60,000 Ethiopian refugees who recently fled conflict in the Tigray region. As such, Sudan is both a temporary and a long-term host country for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants as many choose to move onwards to North Africa and Europe and Sudan stands prominently at the crossroads of the large, complex and constantly evolving Horn of Africa migration route.

Migration and displacement are fueled by political instability, poverty, conflict and climate change. The already dire situation of children and families has been exacerbated amid the ongoing severe and acute economic crisis. National poverty levels have risen drastically, with the most vulnerable populations bearing its brunt. Incomes, wages and purchasing power have fallen, driving 9.6 million people - almost a quarter of the entire population of Sudan - to severe food insecurity. With over half of households not able to meet basic daily food requirements². Vulnerable communities have resorted to reducing meals, switching to cheaper and less nutritious foods, selling livelihood and household assets, to the detriment of future generations and at the risk of creating poverty traps³. Others have spent less on health and education and have for example withdrawn their children from schools.

COVID-19: an additional burden

Sudan's health system is on the brink of collapse with significant shortages of medicines across the primary health care system and hospitals. In 2020, thirteen out of Sudan's eighteen states, experienced one or more outbreaks of chikungunya, dengue fever, rift valley fever or diphtheria. Medical facilities across the country faced shortages of essential drugs, further weakening the national response. The economic crisis has dangerously degraded the already weak, underdeveloped and heavily underfunded primary healthcare system and weak, ageing water and sanitation services.

¹ UNHCR: Sudan Population Dashboard: Refugees and Asylum-seekers (as of 28 February 2019).

² Integrated Food Security Phase Classification estimates from World Food Programme (WFP), 2019. West Darfur State was not analysed by the state-level technical working group; counting West Darfur, figures were estimated around 6.2 million.

³ Impact of economic crisis: household economic situation and coping mechanisms: Khartoum state.

The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the already dire public health situation in the country. UNICEF has shifted personnel and resources towards the efforts to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in-country and to prepare and strengthen Sudan's capacity to respond to the crisis, while also looking to secure the continuity of other ongoing and critical humanitarian life-saving response activities.

Looking to the future

Yet in this glooming picture there is hope. The new transitional government, and signed peace agreement present an unprecedented opportunity to get things right. Establishing peace, ending the economic crisis, as well as the engagement and empowerment of young people and women who were so critical to the change process, have been clearly put at the fore by Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister for the Transitional Government of Sudan.

The current momentum calls for action to capitalise on a potential shift to an enabling environment. It presents an opportunity to work on sustaining peace, capacity-strengthening and community empowerment. Going beyond treating the symptoms of vulnerability - such as acute malnutrition, poor health status or poor learning achievements - and focusing on opportunities to strengthen the capacities of service providers, systems and communities.

UNICEF, given its mandate spans across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum, continues to take a lead role in working in close collaboration with key UN and NGO partners in developing a humanitarian, development and peace nexus (HDPN) approach to coordination and programming in Sudan. This includes response to emergencies and lifesaving needs, investment in preparedness and resilience, seeking durable solutions for displaced people, supporting conflict prevention, social cohesion and peacebuilding, planning for longer-term development, and building and working with national capacities.

EDUCATION STATUS

Education is one of the key priorities for Sudan's transitional government. The new Minister of Education – Professor Mohamed El Amin – announced the need for educational reform, to gradually increase public expenditure on education to 15–20 per cent, adopt the '2-6-3-3' school year ladder (i.e. two years of pre-school, six years of primary, three years of lower secondary and three years of upper secondary), achieve ambitious gross enrollment rate targets, and undertake a comprehensive review of the current curriculum taking into consideration best international practices and the Sudanese context.

These reforms are timely and necessary as education in Sudan faces multiple challenges, of which the key challenges are listed below:

Less than half of six-year-old children are eligible to start grade one and enroll in schools: Poor access, poor retention and poor learning outcomes in basic education come from complex and mutually reinforcing patterns of disadvantage including: poverty, geographical disparities, gender inequities, disability, conflict and displacement, which all raise barriers to schooling in Sudan. Social-cultural beliefs related to child marriage, girls' education and domestic work also pose a great threat to young girls in accessing, transitioning and completing the primary school cycle. Poverty and school fees also negatively affect retention and significantly contribute to high drop-out rates. The majority of schools in rural and nomadic areas suffer from a shortage of clean water and/or gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, which affects both attendance and learning. The scarcity of food also hinders retention and completion of basic school education in remote and refugee areas.

Low government expenditure in education: Sudan spent only around nine per cent of its total public expenditure on education, resulting in an inadequate number of schools, shortage of qualified teachers, insufficient instructional materials. This also resulted in inadequate facilities in schools with regards to toilets, drinking water, school fencing and learners' desks, affecting adversely both access and retention.

The quality of education is generally poor: Findings from the 2018 National Learning Assessment (NLA) on learning outcomes among grade three learners showed that while there had been some improvement in literacy levels, overall learning remained poor. Still many children struggled to read simple familiar words and less than half could comprehend what they read. For mathematics, less than half of the children correctly carried-out level one addition exercises and even fewer were able to carry-out level two addition exercises (Ministry of Education, 2018 National Learning Assessment report).

There is a shortage of basic school infrastructure, notably classrooms, school furniture, water and sanitation facilities: Only 60 per cent of the available classrooms in government schools are permanent with an average classroom pupil ratio of 1:76. This resulted in overcrowded classrooms, open air classes under trees, or children learning in unsafe temporary classrooms. Only two thirds of learners in basic education have access to seats. Separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys and access to clean and safe water is a challenge in Sudan. More than 370,000 learners are enrolled in schools without any water supply with significant variations between states. Nationally, only 50 per cent of the schools are connected to the piped water network. The average toilet to pupil ratio was estimated at 1:91 for girls and 1:102 for boys, which is much higher than the recommended acceptable ratios (1:30 for girls and 1:60 for boys).

School environments are often unsafe, with cases of bullying, gender-based violence, abuse, and corporal punishment happening in schools, but seldom officially reported: School fencing is one of the recommended safety measures for securing learners, as well as codes of conduct for teachers, and community advocacy around positive parenting. Half of primary schools are not fenced. There have been cases of schools losing property including learning materials or occupation of schools by militia groups. The absence of school fences was also linked to availability of teachers, who preferred to teach in schools with a fence. Furthermore, there is a high level of violence within the classroom setting due to the high acceptance of corporal punishment and other forms of violence within communities and families.

There is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in Sudan with just over a quarter of teachers in primary schools meeting the minimum requirement for teaching: Moreover, the curricula followed in education studies gives priority to theory but remains weak in providing practical and pedagogical skills for instruction. The newly installed Minister of Education has made it a priority to revise curricula to be more suited to skill needs for the future.

Adolescents and youth present a new series of challenges: Sudan has a youthful population that grows at a considerable rate. While the young population of Sudan presents a great socio-economic potential, if properly equipped with relevant skills for a healthy and productive life, it also exerts pressure on government resources. Investment in young people starts with life skills, citizenship and skills training. However, for skills training to be effective, basic literacy should be addressed first.

UNICEF and partners collaborate to improve the access to and quality of education to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Four: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Two girls are attending e-learning class in a village close to the border with South Sudan (White Nile state).



RESULTS

OUTPUT 1

More out-of-school children, especially girls, and those in the most vulnerable situations, accessed quality pre-primary, primary and alternative learning opportunities.

UNICEF's education programme was designed to contribute towards the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the national targets and objectives set out in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2018-2022.

The past year remained particularly challenging in meeting the targets for ensuring that more out-of-school children are afforded access to quality education, given the situation with COVID-19, and the subsequent closure of schools in March 2020. Despite the situation, UNICEF worked alongside the Government of Sudan to ensure continuity of learning. In particular, with the support of thematic funding which provided flexibility to respond to the emerging situation, radio lessons were developed for students at the Grade 8 and Grade 11 levels.

As a result, a total of 214,222 students were enabled to access remote lessons for Grade 8 and Grade 11, which helped them continue learning and be well prepared for the transitional exams. Dedicated sessions were also prepared and disseminated in sign language for 512 children with hearing impairments.

To support the school reopening and to mitigate the potential drop-out of students due to the protracted school closures, more than 400,000 reusable and medical face masks and 100 tents, to support social distancing, were provided by UNICEF.

The economic situation deteriorated during 2020, negatively impacting family's ability to pay for the informal costs of schooling, which was compounded by a number of emergencies. UNICEF provided significant support to ensure that the most marginalised students, including, but not limited to, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and those affected by other humanitarian situations, were afforded access to quality education through non-formal and formal education. As a result, 30,577 previously out-of-school children (47 per cent girls), including emergency-affected children and refugees, enrolled in schools, alternative learning programmes (ALP), and e-learning in 2020, before the schools and other learning opportunities were closed due to the COVID pandemic.

In addition, more than 200,000 students were ensured learning in humanitarian situations as a result of the procurement and prepositioning of education supplies, including blackboards, uniforms, re-creation materials and school kits.

Come to school campaigns

The thematic funds contributed to the planning and implementation of the community-driven Come to School Campaign (C2SC) designed to facilitate access to education for out-of-school children. The specific objectives of the C2SC were:

- To sensitise local communities on the importance of boys' and girls' education and the great benefits education has to the individual, family and community.
- To identify out-of-school children and encourage their parents to send them to school or alternative learning programme (ALP) center and help them to continue their education.
- To advocate with government officials and mobilise partners and community leaders to support education.
- To ensure six-year-old children enter school on time.

In 2020, the implementation of the campaign was impacted by the COVID-19 prevention measures and the related schools' closure and lockdown. The campaign was implemented in five states at the beginning of the year, before the crisis. In these five states 35,714 people were reached with the key messages through community engagement and mobilisation events. The key messages were broadcasted through local radio television, posters and microphone

announcements on the street and markets. Community and children’s interest in education is increasing and the government renewed its commitment to prioritise access to education for out-of-school children. Through the campaign many out-of-school children were registered for enrolment in formal or non-formal education.

A total of 13,547 children enrolled in alternative learning programmes (ALP)

To address the schooling needs of older out-of-school children, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to enroll 13,547 adolescents (51 per cent girls) in alternative learning programmes (ALP) centers. The enrolled children were supported with adequate learning supplies and recreation kits. In addition, 450 ALP facilitators (62 per cent women) were trained.

The ALP is adopted by the National Ministry of Education, as an alternative venue of learning for children and adolescents who missed the opportunity to join schooling, including children affected by emergencies. The programme was specifically tailored to support girls and boys who have never attended school, have dropped out or those who cannot be mainstreamed into the normal education system without catching-up the lessons that they lost. It is set to bridge the eight-year primary education cycle in four education calendar years. The ALP curriculum focuses on literacy, numeracy and life-skills to help children mainstream into formal basic education, or alternatively enroll in skills training increasing their employability for improved livelihoods.

In partnership with War Child Holland and the Ministry of Education’s National Council for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE), UNICEF supported established and equipped 82 e-learning centres as part of the global Can’t Wait to Learn (CWTL) project to help at least 6,000 hard-to-reach children access learning opportunities using digital game-based learning material – based on the Sudanese national curricula – on tablets.

Completion of the accelerated alternative learning programme provides a way for the children to access the mainstream formal education system from at least grade three, or even possibly grade four.

Teaching and learning materials for 273,000 children

Education – both primary and secondary – in Sudan is intended to be free of cost. Yet teaching and learning materials are not provided and can be an obstacle for children to attend school. Most Sudanese parents have insufficient income to buy essential learning materials for their daughters and sons. In 2020, more than 273,000 children were reached with teaching and learning materials and/or other supplies like school uniforms and dignity kits, with UNICEF’s support.

A total of 203,253 children in humanitarian situations accessed education

In response to child education needs during emergencies across the country, a total of 203,253 crises-affected children (48 per cent girls) were supported to access and continue learning. The support included distribution of learning supplies, construction of 78 new classrooms, refurbishment of 161 classrooms and construction of 50 gender-sensitive school latrines. Special attention was given to Grade 8 and Grade 11 students for preparation of their transition exams and to ensure exam centres are equipped with necessary supplies (such as face masks, soap, hand sanitizers) to operate a safe environment in the context of COVID-19.

Regarding teachers support, 5,490 teachers (59 per cent women) received training in: Teacher Preparedness Training Programme (TPTP), teaching methodologies for the accelerated learning programme and early childhood education, life skills in emergencies, and education in emergencies. Also, 867 teachers (518 women and 349 men) have increased capacity for emergency response at the school-level, particularly for psychosocial support. A total of 1,564 members of the school management committees (36 per cent women) received the training package on life skills in emergencies, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and COVID-19 awareness.

OUTPUT 2

Education providers, parents and communities have improved knowledge and skills to contribute to quality learning in inclusive safe and protective school environments.

To ensure that children are provided with safe learning environments and quality education, UNICEF worked alongside the Government of Sudan and other partners, to improve the teaching and learning practices at classroom-level.

The key activities and interventions included: i) in-service trainings of teachers, ii) supporting schools to develop and implement child-friendly school-based improvement plans, iii) improving school learning environments through the construction/rehabilitation of classrooms, including the provision of a water and sanitation facilities, and iv) enhancing life skills of adolescents through child and adolescent clubs. In addition to the above, the unlocking literacy strategy was advanced through a UNICEF and World Vision partnership to boost literacy and early-grade reading as well as mathematics programmes.

2,353 primary school teachers (60 per cent women) benefitted from in-service teacher trainings on different courses.

UNICEF contributed to improving the capacity of 2,353 primary school teachers (60 per cent women) by providing in-service teacher trainings. These trainings included various courses to enhance teachers' skills in using learner-centred teaching approaches. In 2020, only 42 per cent of the annual target was reached, given the school closure and nation-wide lockdown as a result of COVID-19.

In response to the school closure, UNICEF Sudan collaborated with its Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional office to contextualise and deliver a teacher training package. The package has three main modules; i) safe school operations, which provides information and facts about COVID-19, ii) well-being and protection of learners (specifically girls) and teachers, which provides simple tools to improve wellbeing of learners and teachers from a protection lens, and iii) back to learning, which is a simple pedagogy that supports teachers identifying learning gaps, stressing prioritising and catching-up on learning while dealing with odd school arrangements. In line with this work, UNICEF supported 5,490 teachers (54 per cent women) to be trained on this Teacher Preparedness Training Programme (TPTP).

In total, parent-teacher association (PTA) members in 69 schools were supported to develop school improvement plans (SIPs) through the establishment of SIP committees and received school grants against it.

Training was provided to 1,074 parent-teacher association (PTA) members (34 per cent women). These members – representing 108 PTAs – gained skills in better school co-management and community mobilisation. Each school improvement plan (SIP) committee had at least twelve members (one head teacher, three teachers, two students, two young people, and four members of the parent-teacher association). Trained SIP committees who managed to develop a school improvement plan received a school grant of SDG 55,000 (about USD 1,000) to implement the plans they developed. The development of the school improvement plans is key for enabling school communities to undertake school-based monitoring and actions towards equity and quality learning issues in their communities.

In addition, school improvement planning as well as school grants increased local ownership and empowered the community to take active part in their schools.

Financial support from various donors contributed significantly to the achievement of results. Moreover, partner coordination meetings at the Ministry of Education shaped UNICEF's programming and contributed to the achieved results.

The protracted (displacement) crises, low capacity among government partners and inadequate availability of flexible funds affected some of the implementation, including ensuring a timely and comprehensive response to COVID-19.

Given the big impact of SIPs and school grants on improving access, equity and quality indicators on schools, the Ministry of Education together with the education partners in Sudan decided to include this activity in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) plan and managed to receive funding for it covering all schools in Sudan. SIP grants supported by GPE grant will be disbursed to schools in 2021. While UNICEF support will continue to be implemented to extremely vulnerable schools targeted by UNICEF to maximise the impact at the school-level.

Nearly 32,850 children benefitted from an improved school environment in 73 schools.

In 2020, 73 schools were supported by construction and rehabilitation of classrooms. A total of 61 semi-permanent and permanent classrooms were constructed (7 completed, 54 ongoing). In addition, despite the constraints of the lockdown within the country, the rehabilitation of 90 semi-permanent and permanent classrooms (70 completed, 20 ongoing) continued, while the construction of 31 latrines (21 completed, 10 ongoing) are expected to support enrolment and retention of students.

6,360 children and adolescents (58 per cent girls) were equipped with life skills through the establishment of 229 child and adolescent clubs. Moreover, as part of the UPSHIFT social entrepreneurship programme – which is a global Generation Unlimited empowerment model that targets young people by equipping them with social innovation skills – a comprehensive UPSHIFT package composed of life skills, social innovation and social enterprise was developed in partnership between UNICEF and partner Aflatoun. Consequently, 1,196 teachers (50 per cent women) in Khartoum and West Kordofan were trained after it was translated to Arabic, resulting in improved understanding of the links between education and skills.

Following the extended school closure in 2020, a 24 per cent increase in child marriage and an increase of 35 per cent in child labour was reported compared to 2019. Reaching young women and men and equipping them with life and employability skills is becoming more important than ever in the context of Sudan. Therefore, UNICEF Sudan is planning to invest more in the area of supporting young people empowerment, participation and development.

OUTPUT 3

The capacity of the education sector is strengthened to legislate, plan, coordinate and budget the provision of equitable and inclusive education opportunities.

During 2020, UNICEF continued to support governance and managerial capacity of the Ministry of Education at national and state-level. UNICEF support also focused on strengthening the use of evidence-based data to better plan, coordinate, implement, and monitor the public education sector activities (formal and non-formal). UNICEF continued its role as the coordinating-agency for the education sector, under the leadership of the Minister of Education.

This work was particularly critical in UNICEF's role to support the Government of Sudan in coordinating the education COVID-19 response, which also oversaw the development of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) accelerated funding grant for COVID-19, in its role as coordinating agent. In addition, UNICEF remained coordinating agent of the broader GPE development grants. It is expected that UNICEF's role will continue to assist the improvement, harmonisation and alignment of financial and technical support, and to hold the government accountable for key commitments.

Support to education reforms

With the political changes in the country and the formulation of the transitional government in August 2020, the Federal Ministry of Education senior management, with UNICEF technical and financial support, embarked on a series of high-level consultative education reform conferences. The outcomes of the conferences provided the basic ingredients for the education reforms, particularly in areas related to curriculum review, teachers' issues, education financing and governance.

To support the ongoing reforms, the Ministry of Education, supported by UNICEF, started the recruitment of two international experts in the areas of ‘teacher training’ and ‘curriculum review’ with the aim of improving the education quality and learning outcomes. The teacher training expert is already onboard, and the curriculum review expert is still under discussion.

While the Government of Sudan demonstrated capacity to prepare and facilitate the above-mentioned policy forums, the main barrier to implementing the Ministry of Education reform agenda remains the lack of adequate financing. It is anticipated that the current financial crisis in the country will hamper the process of reforms and will have an adverse effect on the education service delivery.

During 2020, the Ministry of Education – with UNICEF support – successfully finalised the updated draft of two main strategies; the Teachers Training strategy and the Girls Education Sub-Sector strategy. The Girls Education Sub-Sector strategy proposed interventions will improve girls’ access, retention and completion of the different levels of education. The teachers training strategy, on the other hand, addresses the teachers pre-service and in-service training challenges and seeks to support the emergence of consistently good teaching in all regions of the country. It highlights the importance of practical classroom experience as the key feature of the training process.

Access to quality education and integration of refugee children into the national system was also addressed in the refugee education group that was constituted with UNICEF support. The group is chaired by the Undersecretary of the Federal Ministry of Education and includes members from various UN agencies and affiliated government agencies.

Additional funding and support from the Global Partnership for Education

Sudan successfully received three Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grants including the programme implementation grant, the accelerated funding and the COVID 19 grant following the approval of the Education COVID-19 Response Plan by the education partners’ group in which UNICEF plays a lead role. The receipt of the GPE grants will contribute to the improvement of enrollment and retention in basic education, betterment of the school environment and strengthening of the capacity of the Ministry of Education staff. For all three grants, UNICEF is the coordinating agent. Advocacy and genuine consultation were the main features of the application process leading to a consensus on the financing priorities between the partners and the Ministries of Education and Finance.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2020, UNICEF partnered with more than thirty local and international organisations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) at the national and state levels, to increase access to quality education among school-aged children.

Strategic partnerships with both financial and non-financial partners, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the European Union, the Governments of Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration), as well as several other private sector partners in the Netherlands and the United States, in addition to UN agencies, the World Bank, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, all contributed to the achievement of results.

UNICEF’s partnership with the European Union was strengthened through a significant financial support for both education in emergencies (ECHO) and the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) implemented in coordination with SOFRECO, Save the Children, Expertise France, and the British Council. The German Cooperation – through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)-KfW Development Bank – supports critical multi-year education initiatives in eastern Sudan with a holistic, multi-partner entry-point

CHALLENGES

- The country is currently in transition from a 30-year dictatorship. The transitional period with a new majority civilian-led government has meant a reshuffling of the leadership in the different line ministries posing a challenge on the pace of programme implementation. To date, we are providing technical support to build capacity and inform some of the key decision-making processes, such as the revision of the curriculum.
- While promising progress has been made, the situation in the wake of ongoing socio-economic and political transition in Sudan is changing and education needs are increasing. The entire education system is fragile and overstretched at all levels. The monitoring and data reporting system remains a big challenge considering data quality and timeliness concerns. UNICEF is working to support capacity-building of ministry staff to strengthen the education management information system (EMIS), as well as to develop some additional monitoring tools to collect data on a more regular cycle at the field-level.
- Schools across Sudan were closed from March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for which reports indicate a negative impact on learning outcomes, even with efforts to support continuity of learning.
- School construction is one of the core activities to open up more learning spaces for students. However, the process was hindered in 2020 with many issues including slow procurement and poor coordination processes, limited cash availability for contractors and insufficient regular monitoring.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closure has provided the sector with opportunities for learning. For one, the e-learning platform, of which UNICEF has supported the development and implementation has been a successful pilot in 2020, reaching the most marginalised with an innovative learning platform. The e-learning centres were established in remote, hard-to-reach areas, targeting out-of-school youth with learning opportunities, focusing on literacy and numeracy. Indicative reports noted keen interest by students and community and gains in learning. There is opportunity to further scale this work to reach other marginalised students.
- Within classrooms, there is also a need for close integration of classroom learning (e.g. providing learning materials for students, having teachers trained on how to use these materials) and school leadership strengthening as they interface with parents and the communities and provides the direction for school improvement planning. As a result, the UNICEF team reviewed how better to provide a 'full package' of support to vulnerable communities. The goal of this support is to stay engaged with the communities for longer durations to see full cohorts of students complete their schooling and providing capacity-building to the parent-teacher associations related to school improvement planning.
- Alternative learning programmes have proven effective for those children who either have never enrolled in school or who have dropped-out as a means to bridge back into formal schools. And, given the success of the ALP, it is recommended to assess the work and evaluate the recommendations in how to improve the current work to continue to ensure that children have education opportunities.
- An integrated approach to programming has resulted in significant gains; this has been evident in 2020 in the respond to COVID-19, in which WASH and Education has been an essential package; and our work in adolescents bridged child protection, youth, and education, which met the needs of the beneficiaries in a comprehensive package.

FUTURE WORK PLAN

In 2020, UNICEF has initiated the process of the mid-term review of Country Programme 2018-2021. Based on the review UNICEF's education team will pursue the following planned results:

Access to education:

UNICEF will continue to drive its programme to afford all children, including the most marginalised and those in humanitarian situations, the opportunity to access quality education.

In particular, UNICEF will focus on ensuring its alternative learning programme centres offers second-chance learning opportunities in emergency and non-emergency situations. This will include working with and providing education for girls in early marriage, teenage mothers and pregnant and lactating girls, who are largely excluded from the education system.

In addition, UNICEF will work to lay the groundwork for future programming in the area of inclusive education through undertaking a situation analysis of children with disabilities in Sudan, as it pertains to education and map existing best practices for inclusive education in Sudan. Building on the gains made in the e-learning, this work will be expanded into the adolescents' space to offer additional alternative learning opportunities for out of school use, in hard-to-reach areas, using low-cost technology coupled with solar energy.

To address the disproportionate deprivations affecting children in internally displaced and refugee communities, nomads, children in rural areas, girls and children with disabilities, UNICEF and its partners will work at the policy-level to promote the protection, education and integration of marginalised children into the public education system. More than half of out-of-school children are from conflict-affected areas; therefore, UNICEF will continue its *education in emergencies* advocacy and programmes.

Quality of Education:

Working with the Government of Sudan, at all levels, UNICEF will continue its work in transforming teacher education in Sudan, with a particular focus on in-service teacher training efforts, which complement the work that is being done by other partners at the pre-service level.

UNICEF will also support the government to model early childhood education, through low-cost and scalable interventions. While at the same time, UNICEF will drive the adolescent's agenda, recognising the large percentage of the Sudanese population within this age range and their great need for education. This will incorporate aspects of life-skills education, literacy and numeracy, and transition to work opportunities.

Governance:

In 2021, UNICEF will continue its role as sector coordinator alongside the Ministry of Education to ensure coordination efforts amongst partners. The agency will also ensure its role as coordinating agent of the respective GPE grants. In addition, UNICEF will continue to strengthen the enabling environment within Sudan, working to drive the policy reformation especially in the areas of teacher training, refugee education and integration, and curriculum reform.

Recognising the diminishing fiscal space within the sector by the Government of Sudan, coupled with the economic instability and currency depreciation, UNICEF will leverage its technical expertise to develop a budget brief for education. which will be used as an advocacy piece.

STORY: BRINGING EDUCATION SUPPLIES TO JEBEL MARRA FOR FIRST TIME IN A DECADE

Gorlanbang, is a remote village in the southern mountains of Jebel Marra. It is a six-hour walk to the top of the mountain, and about 155 kilometres from South Darfur's capital, Nyala, and the only way to reach there is by foot, donkey or a camel. Gorlanbang is a mountainous village and is one of the largest in the Jebel Marra area with a population of approximately 125,000 people, including Internally Displaced (IDPs). Due to conflict in the area, many who were displaced fled to seek safety in this area which had been inaccessible to humanitarians for over ten years until June 2020 where UNICEF and its partners were able to access and assess the situation to further support the community. The area lacks basic necessities, including safe drinking water, health care centers and proper school infrastructures.

There are over 40 basic and secondary schools in Gorlanbang and are in far distances for many villages, students usually walk one to two hours daily. The school environments are very poor and lack infrastructure, students and teachers do not have desks and usually sit on stones. Unfortunately, all the schools lack the basic necessities including water facilities, toilets, recreational areas, fencing and feeding programs. Since 2010, there has been no capacity building directed to teachers and parent-teacher-associations (PTA). There are only two teachers in Gorlanbang who under payroll, the rest of the teachers are volunteers.

In addition to the lack of infrastructure in schools, only sixty percent of children are in school while the forty percent remain out of school due to the high level of poverty levels in the area. Many girls in Gorlanbang remain out of school due to early child marriage.

After accessing Gorlanbang for the first time in June 2020, UNICEF was able to analyze the situation of education there and quickly act. UNICEF then returned in November 2020 with much needed school supplies including recreational kits, and teacher kits for over 800 school children in Gorlanbang elementary school. UNICEF will continue to deliver supplies throughout the area for students in surrounding schools. This is part of a long-term plan to help train teachers, rehabilitate and build new classrooms in addition to providing water, hygiene and sanitation services (WASH) like toilets and running water.



For more stories, please check UNICEF Sudan's website: [stories](#)

Education supplies are transported on camels to reach remote and previously inaccessible communities in Sudan's Jebel Marra region in Darfur.



EXPRESSION OF THANKS

UNICEF Sudan would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to all donor partners who continued to support us or even scaled-up their support during 2020. It was not an easy year, yet UNICEF and partners reached millions of girls and boys with (often) lifesaving interventions, which would not have been possible without the generous funding received. Thanks to the support, UNICEF can continue its mission to meeting the needs and fulfilling the rights of the most vulnerable children, their families and communities.

Thematic or flexible funding for UNICEF's health interventions is crucial as it provides us with greater flexibility to respond to the needs of children in a timely, well-planned and efficient manner. It allows us to have a bigger and more effective impact on the lives of vulnerable and marginalised populations in a highly volatile, complex and dynamically evolving context like Sudan.

FEEDBACK FORM

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. The form is available on line at this link: [English version](#) or [French version](#).

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

TABLE ONE: Planned education budget for 2020 (in US dollars)

Intermediate Result	Funding Type	Planned Budget
Output 3.1 More out-of-school children, especially girls, and those in the most vulnerable situations, access quality pre-primary, primary and alternative learning opportunities.	RR	377,000
	OR	3,607,005
	ORE	50,782,851
	Total	54,012,356
Output 3.2 Education providers, parents and communities have improved knowledge and skills to contribute to quality learning in inclusive safe and protective school environments.	RR	377,000
	OR	3,607,005
	ORE	00
	Total	3,984,005
Output 3.3 Capacity of education sector at subnational and national levels is strengthened to legislate, plan, coordinate and budget the provision of equitable and inclusive education opportunities.	RR	188,500
	OR	1,803,502
	ORE	00
	Total	1,992,002
Total	RR	942,500
	OR	9,017,513
	ORE	50,782,851
	Total	60,742,864

TABLE TWO: Thematic contributions received for education in 2020 (in US dollar)

Donors	Grant Number*	Contribution Amount (USD)	Programmable Amount (USD)
SIDA - Sweden	SC1899040102		430,059
Total			430,059

TABLE THREE: Thematic expenses for education in 2020 (in US dollars)

Organisational targets	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	All programme accounts
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	20,114	354,329	374,443
22-02 Learning outcomes	1,337	115,144	116,481
22-03 Skills development	48	16,901	16,949
Grand Total	21,499	486,374	507,874

TABLE FOUR: Expenses for education in 2020 (in US dollars)

Organisational targets	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	All programme accounts
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	2,535,247	3,234,982	413,504	6,183,733
22-02 Learning outcomes	2,248,987	1,925,230	686,115	4,860,332
22-03 Skills development	153,223	1,234,986	8,805	1,397,014
Grand Total	4,937,457	5,295,198	1,108,424	11,341,079

TABLE FIVE: Expenses by specific intervention codes in 2020 (in US dollars)

Row Labels	Expense
22-01-01 Provision of (formal and non-formal) early learning pre-primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	783,558
22-01-03 Provision of (formal and non-formal) primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	3,195,519
22-01-05 Provision of (formal and non-formal) multiple-levels or alternative pathways of education (including in temporary learning spaces)	429,616
22-01-06 System strengthening - inclusive education for children with disabilities	7,888
22-01-07 System strengthening - inclusive education for other vulnerable children poorest quintile, ethnic/linguistic minorities, migrant children, non-citizens/undocumented children etc.	143,209
22-01-08 System strengthening - risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	65,175
22-01-09 Peacebuilding education	226,296
22-01-10 System strengthening - gender-responsive access (excluding SRGBV)	57,626
22-01-11 Other activities for equitable access to quality education e.g. school feeding, school grants	20,939
22-01-12 Education analyses including OOSCI, education sector analyses, etc.	28,193
22-01-13 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	17,749
22-01-14 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	55,015
22-01-15 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	30,902
22-01-18 United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) Secretariat	9,577
22-01-99 Technical assistance - Equitable access to quality education	391,713
22-02-02 Provision or procurement of primary education learning materials	785,475
22-02-03 Provision or procurement of secondary education learning materials	167,044
22-02-07 Provision of early learning / pre-primary education teacher training	89,390
22-02-08 Provision of primary education teacher training	2,087,558
22-02-12 Provision of training of school communities e.g. parent teacher associations, school management committees	873,822
22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary policy, leadership, and budget	1,970
22-02-17 System strengthening - curricula and learning materials design (excluding early learning / pre-primary)	827
22-02-20 System strengthening - teacher development, management, and support	61
22-02-21 System strengthening - community participation and social accountability, e.g. school management committees	9,154
22-02-24 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	5,355
22-02-25 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	7,463
22-02-28 School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)	7,490
22-02-99 Technical assistance - Learning outcomes	53,750
22-03-02 Provision of skills development for adolescents (10-19-year-olds) (including in temporary learning spaces)	47,143
22-03-03 Provision of skills development for multiple age groups (including in temporary learning spaces)	76,030
22-03-06 System strengthening - gender equitable skills development (excluding SRGBV)	2,973
22-03-99 Technical assistance - Skills development	120,369
26-01-02 Programme reviews (annual, UNDAF, MTR, etc.)	7,378
26-02-01 Situation analysis or update on women and children	45,078
26-02-02 MICS - General	-49
26-02-04 Stimulating demand for and capacity to use data	3
26-02-06 Analysis of data	85
26-02-08 Programme monitoring	7,386

26-02-09 Field monitoring	27,304
26-03-03 Children, adolescent and youth engagement and participation	13,448
26-03-04 Community engagement, participation and accountability	44,529
26-03-07 Strengthening C4D in government systems including preparedness for humanitarian action	12,813
26-03-99 Technical assistance – cross-sectoral communication for development	19,616
26-05-06 Building global / regional / national stakeholder evaluation capacity	2,986
26-05-11 Building global / regional / national stakeholder research capacity	1,535
26-06-04 Leading advocate	289,598
26-06-06 Supporter engagement	52,916
26-07-01 Operations support to programme delivery	909,918
27-01-06 Headquarters and Regional Office technical support to multiple goal areas	5,211
27-01-15 Country Office programme coordination	10,019
27-01-16 Country Office advocacy and communication	47,045
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at Country Office	45,413
Grand Total	11,341,079

TABLE SIX: Planned budget for 2021 (in USD) *

Output	Funding type	planned budget	funded budget	shortfall
Output 3.1: Access to Education	RR	377,000	265,545	111,455
	ORR	3,878,500	5,277,066.82	-1,398,566
	ORE	40,433,430	10,732,898.73	29,700,532
	Total	44,688,930	16,275,509	28,413,421
Output 3.2: Learning Outcomes	RR	377,000	98,010	278,990
	ORR	3,878,500	12,048,541	-8,170,041
	ORE	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	4,255,500	12,146,551	-7,891,051
Output 3.3: System Strengthening/Policy	RR	188,500	33,878	154,622
	ORR	1,939,250	240,378.70	1,698,872
	ORE	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	2,127,750	274,256	1,853,494
Output 4: Technical Support	RR	292,620	292,620	0.00
	ORR	2,457,880	2,457,880	0.00
	ORE	416,898	416,898	0.00
	Total	3,167,398	3,167,398	0.00
Education total	RR	1,235,120	690,053	545,067
	ORR	12,154,130	20,023,865	-7,869,735
	ORE	40,850,328	11,149,796	29,700,532
	Total	54,239,578	31,893,714	22,345,864

*All expenses are provisional and subject to change

Contact Address
Saja Abdullah
Deputy Representative a.i.

Email: sabdullah@unicef.org

UNICEF Sudan
P.O Box 1358, Khartoum, Sudan



**United Nations Children's Fund
Sudan Country Office**

PO Box 1358
Gerief west [Manshiya],
First District H, Plot 6/3
Telephone: +249 (0) 156 553 670
Facsimile: +249 (0) 183 587 741

www.unicef.org/sudan
© United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF)