

The background of the cover is a photograph of several young boys in a classroom. They are wearing green school uniforms. One boy in the foreground has his right arm raised high. Other boys are looking towards the camera or slightly to the side. The background shows a blue wall and a green door.

UNICEF SUDAN

EDUCATION 2021

EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT

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Cover photo: a boy knows the answer to a question in a school in Blue Nile state.

ACRONYMS

ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
C4D	Communication for Development
COVID-19	Novel coronavirus
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HNO	Human Needs Overview
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification
IRCSES	Integration of Refugee Children in the Sudanese Education System
LEG	Local Education Group
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCLAE	National Council for Literacy and Adult Education
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
ORE	Other Resources Emergency (emergency thematic funding)
ORR	Other Resources Regular (thematic funding)
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PTA	Outpatient Therapeutic Programme
RR	Regular Resources
S3M	Simple Spatial Survey Method
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIP	School Improvement Plan
TPTP	Teacher Preparedness Training Programme
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPSHIFT	Social entrepreneurship programme
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two years of progress towards democracy came to a sudden halt when a military takeover took place on 25 October 2021. The subsequent uncertainties - both politically and economically - make children and their families even more vulnerable than they already were. The humanitarian needs are higher than ever. More than 14 million people, including almost 8 million children, are in need of humanitarian assistance. It is key that we stay and deliver for Sudan's children, now more than ever.

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.

Despite the immensely challenging operational environment, UNICEF significantly contributed towards increasing the access to quality education for girls and boys in Sudan (including internally displaced persons and refugees). UNICEF provided critical programming in response to humanitarian situations, for example in West Darfur where continuation of education services was ensured for 20,550 students (8,358 girls and 12,192 boys). UNICEF also reached approximately 17,855 refugee children (living in out of camps settings) with access to quality education.

UNICEF worked to increase access to education through the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, teacher offices, water and sanitation facilities in 1,134 schools. As a result, 4,450 students (2,225 girls and 2,225 boys) could learn in an improved learning environment. This was complemented with the provision of teaching and learning supplies, which benefitted 488,024 students (281,700 girls and 206,324 boys).

UNICEF worked alongside the National Council for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) to support the operationalisation of 961 *alternative learning programme* (ALP) centres, resulting in more than 218,252 out-of-school children (111,172 girls and 107,080 boys) being afforded access to education. UNICEF is also working with NCLAE to assess the ALP programme to incorporate recommendations for further development, alongside aligning the curriculum to the revised national curriculum, to strengthen the overall governance of the programme.

In 2021, the UNICEF education programme continued to support the Government of Sudan in improving the quality of education. This has been specifically noted in improving the capacity of 14,184 teachers (8,659 women and 5,525 men) resulting in improved learning for more than 800,000 students. This work has been complemented by UNICEF's technical support to the development of the 'teacher competency framework' and the overall drafting of the Head Teachers' and Supervisors Competency Framework. These documents will support in guiding the overall work and management of teachers, to result in strengthened teaching processes at school-level.

On innovation: under the overall framework and cooperation of UNICEF and Microsoft, UNICEF Sudan developed a contextualised digital 'Learning Passport' that has offline and online capabilities, with additional Sudanese educational content. In addition to supporting 78 e-learning centres, UNICEF also installed the Learning Passport on 20 smartboards/interactive screens in non-traditional locations throughout Khartoum, including in mosques and markets, which has allowed access to quality and alternative learning to more than 9,000 students. UNICEF has also supported the Ministry of Education in developing an e-learning strategy, which aims to guide the emerging work on e-learning, to provide coordination amongst partners, and ensure a harmonised and strategic approach to scaling-up information and communication technology (ICT) in education in Sudan.

Throughout 2021, UNICEF supported the capacity development of the education sector. For one, UNICEF has collaborated with UNESCO and the World Bank, alongside the Federal Ministry of Education, to analyse the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and lay the groundwork for improving the overall functioning of the system. In addition, UNICEF has improved the policy framework through the development of the *girls' education sector strategy* (GESS) and subsequent roadmap and associated budget and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will lead to a more concerted approach to designing and implementing programmes specifically targeting the inequities experienced by girls' in accessing quality education.

In 2022, UNICEF's education team will pursue the following planned results as defined in the country programme and articulated in the annual work plan:

- 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.
- Scale-up access to innovative e-learning opportunities in both formal and informal educational settings, working to bridge the digital divide and ensure increased opportunities to improve learning outcomes.
- 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 72 per cent of the Sudanese population are under 24 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 (aged below eighteen). Spurred by a high population growth of 2.4 per cent, Sudan is experiencing a demographic shift towards a youth-based population.

Sudan also receives high numbers of refugees from neighbouring Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, Central African Republic and South Sudan and, in recent years, significant numbers of Syrian refugees and several thousand Yemeni refugees. The country is both a temporary and a long-term host country of refugees and migrants through its position at the crossroads of the large, complex and constantly evolving Horn of Africa migration route. Sudan is also a country of origin for migration due to high poverty, unemployment, conflict and insecurity. At the beginning of 2022, Sudan hosted more than one million refugees and asylum seekers.¹

The Sudanese revolution that ousted former President Omar al-Bashir and his regime in April 2019 gained worldwide attention and received strong support from the international community. Women and youth were at the forefront of the revolution and played a significant role in attaining political and social change. However, on 25 October 2021, the political and economic gains made after the revolution were threatened by a military takeover. The civilian transitional cabinet was dissolved, its leader was detained, and a state of emergency was declared. In the aftermath of the takeover, the breakdown of national governance systems,

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/sdn>

ongoing human and child rights violations and a decline in domestic and international development financing, risk rolling back the hard-won achievements of the past two years.

As a result, millions of children and families in Sudan continue to suffer from financial hardship, the health and socio-economic implications of COVID-19, ongoing hazards such as flooding, drought, conflict, and displacement, as well as the effects of lifting subsidies from essential commodities in 2021. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 14.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom 8.1 million are women and girls, and 7.8 million are children. The HNO also indicates that food insecurity reached an all-time high with 9.8 million people (22 per cent of the Sudanese population) facing an acute level of Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 and above.

Children of Sudan are among the most affected by the turmoil in the country. For vulnerable infants living through prolonged crises and emergencies, 1 out of every 18 will not reach their fifth birthday, and 1 in 7 will not have enough food to prevent wasting and stunting. Waterborne diseases such as cholera remain a risk due to unsafe drinking water. Even before COVID-19, more than three children were out of school², dispossessing young Sudanese of education, the safety of the schoolyard and school feeding. Conflict and insecurity increase forced recruitment and association with armed groups, creating physical and mental distress for all gender and age groups. These crises leave women more vulnerable to gender-based violence and negative social norms leave girls at risk of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and restricted education.

EDUCATION STATUS

Sudan has made significant improvements in basic education over the last decade. Between 2008 and 2018, the total number of schools (public and private) increased by 2,800, allowing one million more children to access education. The number of students completing primary education and proceeding to secondary school increased from 251 to 336 thousand annually during the same time. Provision of preschool education, an important step to build school readiness, is relatively high with the gross enrollment rate (GER) reaching 43 per cent in 2018, ten percentage points above average for Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 26 per cent of basic schools have preschool facilities. In 2018, 65 percent of learners enrolled in Grade 1 reported having some preschool education, an improvement of about 16 percentage points from 49 percent recorded in mid-2000.

Despite recent progress in student enrollments, the education sector suffers from multiple challenges: (i) low and unequal levels of access and completion; (ii) low and stagnant student learning outcomes; (iii) poor education system management; (iv) inadequate learning environments; and (v) low level of public spending on education and significant contributions from households. Further, the situation in the education sector was negatively compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in early school closure in May/June 2021 and the political instability in the last quarter of 2021 due to the military coup. Other challenges include:

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.

² 2022 HNO

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.

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.

A girl is 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.

In 2021, UNICEF continued to support the education sector in Sudan in addressing issues regarding access to education for the most marginalised children, by focusing on refugee children, children affected by humanitarian situations, and out-of-school children.

Construction and Rehabilitation

In 2021, more than of **40,950 children were reached with access to education** through the rehabilitation of 648 permanent and semi-permanent classrooms and construction of 53 school units (two classrooms and one teacher office per unit) and 148 semi-permanent classrooms. UNICEF also constructed 69 gender-sensitive latrines with hand-washing facilities. This achievement contributed to improving the learning environment and encouraged enrollment and retention, especially for girls. Construction work remained a challenge in 2021, due to the fluctuating economic conditions and lack of appropriate suppliers, but UNICEF is mitigating these challenges through ensuring more support and appropriate oversight to the process.

Come to school campaigns

Community involvement and participation is important and widely used in education programming, especially in difficult contexts have proven to be an effective strategy in encouraging out-of-school children's (OOSC) enrolment and retention in schools. Therefore, UNICEF and education partners in Sudan continued supporting implementation of community driven 'come to school campaigns' in selected localities to raise awareness on the importance of education and encourage parents to send both their boys and girls to school or alternative learning programmes.

In 2021, the campaign was implemented in eight states at the beginning of the year, to support the school reopening and in September/October in 12 states to support the new academic year in 92 localities. In total, **250,716 people were reached with key messages on the importance of education** 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.

The continued implementation of 'come to school campaigns' and the related awareness and community mobilisation sessions resulted in an increased demand for education amongst out-of-school children, especially in rural areas as well as amongst nomads and emergency-affected populations. Responding to this increasing demand was challenging because of low government investment in education, limited resources and poor school infrastructure and learning environment. In many villages and nomadic areas, young students are still attending primary schools or ALP centres in open spaces or temporary shelters due to over-crowding or lack of school facilities and they are at risk of dropping out. UNICEF and partners are advocating for long-term policy and strategic education planning that tackles education supply and demand barriers.

Alternative learning programmes (ALP) in 2021

Continuing UNICEF's work in the *alternative learning programme* (ALP), UNICEF worked alongside the National Council for Adult Literacy and Education (NCLAE) to support the operationalisation of 961 ALP centres, which resulted in an additional **59,046 out-of-school children (50 per cent girls) being afforded access to education**. The enrolled children were supported with provision of learning supplies, textbooks, recreation kits, school uniforms and dignity kits for girls, improvement of learning environment and facilitators training.

UNICEF is also working with the NCLAE to assess the ALP programme and to incorporate recommendations for further development, alongside aligning the curriculum to the revised national curriculum. The overall governance of the programme is also being strengthened.

The ALP is adopted by the 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.

E-learning

Under the overall framework and cooperation of UNICEF and Microsoft, UNICEF Sudan, developed a contextualised 'Learning Passport' that has offline and online capabilities, with additional Sudanese educational content.

A global digital learning platform powered by Microsoft the 'Learning Passport' was launched in Sudan on 20 October 2021 by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Telecommunications and Digital Transformation in collaboration with UNICEF. The Learning Passport is complemented with government-provided textbooks, interactive learning activities, video educational content, and assessments to measure children's progress. The platform comes into operation after two years of disruption to the educational system in Sudan because of political volatility and the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last year and a half, 8.1 million students from Sudan were affected by closing of schools. Moreover, there are still three million out-of-school children in Sudan. This platform will assist in addressing the learning loss of children, as well as reach out-of-school children with educational opportunities while working to equalise the opportunities between Sudanese children. In addition, the platform will complement the formal learning system and is in line with a long-term government strategy. The platform has been zero-rated, based on agreements with Zain, Canar, MTN and Sudatel telecommunication companies in Sudan, expanding reach and opportunity for the usage of the platform.

In addition to the **78 e-learning centres in four states**, UNICEF also installed the Learning Passport on 20 smartboards/interactive screens in non-traditional locations throughout Khartoum, including in mosques and markets, which has allowed access to quality and alternative learning to more than 9,000 students.

Teaching and learning materials

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 2021, more than **444,829 children were reached with teaching and learning materials and/or other supplies like school uniforms and dignity kits**, with UNICEF's support.

Education in emergencies

Overall, the year 2021 witnessed improvement in access to learning after closure for educational institutions especially basic and secondary schools for nine months during 2020. In summary, a total of **199,350 out-of-school children in emergency situations (100,560 girls and 98,790 boys) were supported to have access to formal and informal education opportunities** with a total 444,829 students (254,261 girls and 190,568 boys) reached with education supplies to continue learning. Also, a total of 2,965 schools were supported to implement safe school protocols for COVID-19 prevention and control by providing COVID-19 prevention kits, face masks, hand sanitizer, and water tanks. As for improving the school environment, UNICEF support helped construct 78 new classrooms, rehabilitate 161 classrooms and construct 50 school latrines for the benefit of 87,708 children (46,854 girls and 40,854 boys) across Sudan. Also, 13,426 teachers

(7,811 women and 5,615 men) benefitted from the ‘Teacher Preparedness Training Programme (TPTP)’, teaching methodologies for the alternative learning programme and early childhood education, life skills in emergency, and education in emergency. UNICEF contributed to building the capacity of 2,655 members of the school management committees (990 women and 1,665 men) on co-school management, life skills in emergency, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), COVID-19 awareness, and school improvement planning.

UNICEF’s education team provided critical programming in response to humanitarian situations, most notably in West Darfur, when conflict disrupted the education sector in January and March of 2021. UNICEF was able to mobilise funding to ensure continuity of education for more than 20,550 students (8,358 girls and 12,192 boys) in three localities.

OUTPUT 2

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

In 2021, UNICEF continued to complement efforts of the Government of Sudan, through the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to improve the quality of education. UNICEF programmes aimed to enhance education quality, mostly by focusing on improving teachers’ capacity. As a result, **5,306 teachers (3,343 women and 1,963 men) received training in subject-matter, pedagogy and life skills**. This will improve the classroom teaching and learning practices for approximately 318,360 students.

In addition, recognising the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system, UNICEF worked alongside the Ministry of Education to train **5,931 teachers (3,292 women and 2,639 men) utilising the ‘Teacher Preparedness Training Programme’**, which provides simple tools to improve wellbeing of learners and teachers from a protection lens, and pedagogy that supports teachers identifying learning gaps. As a result, more than 1,500 schools were equipped with safe school protocols, with COVID-19 prevention and control measures in place, ensuring **safe and conducive learning environments for more than 350,000 students**.

To enhance students’ learning, UNICEF supported the drafting of a *national costed action plan* to complement the national teacher training strategy. The action plan aims to establish a national coordinated pathway for ensuring long-term support for pre-service, in-service, new teachers’ induction training, and the coordination and governance of teachers’ training. Moreover, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Health and other sector partners to develop competency frameworks for teachers, school headmasters and supervisors. The competency frameworks, upon endorsement, will standardise competencies and the level of proficiency per competency for teachers, headmasters and supervisors of different levels.

Life skills

Aligning with global priorities and addressing the unique concerns and educational issues of adolescents within Sudan, UNICEF has been collaborating with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Ministry of Education to implement the UPSHIFT social entrepreneurship programme. This programme is complemented by child clubs, which similarly to UPSHIFT, offer life skills, social innovation and entrepreneurial manuals to empower young people to identify challenges affecting them and their communities and create entrepreneurial and innovative ways to address them. As a result, **8,224 children and adolescents (4,441 girls and 3,783 boys) were equipped with life skills through the establishment of 388 child and adolescent clubs**.

OUTPUT 3

During 2021, 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's role as coordinating agent

UNICEF continued its role as the coordinating-agency for the education sector, under the leadership of the Minister of Education. In 2021, UNICEF remained the coordinating agent of three Global Partnership of Education (GPE) grants, which contributed to the **safe school reopening of more than 16,475 schools and impacting 5,585,417 students**. UNICEF also remains the chair of the Local Education Group (LEG), alongside the Minister of Education, to coordinate development partners, humanitarian actors, UN agencies, and donors to collaborate and work towards achieving the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023.

Support to education policy reform

UNICEF has improved the policy framework through the **development of the girls' education sector strategy (GESS)** and subsequent roadmap and associated budget and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will lead to a more concerted approach to designing and implementing programmes specifically targeting the inequities experienced by girls' in accessing quality education. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Education in developing an e-learning strategy, which aims to guide the emerging work on digital learning, to provide coordination amongst partners, and ensure a harmonised and strategic approach to scaling-up ICT in education in Sudan.

Strengthening data systems

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education on the **education management information system (EMIS)** functionality review that provided recommendations on the priority areas for improvements. This work will lay the groundwork for improving the data monitoring and governance for improved understanding of the overall sector, and improved information management to inform programme and policy decisions.

School improvement plans

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, was able to **design and pilot the school improvement planning (SIP) programme**. SIP focuses on provision of training to school headmasters, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), teachers, and students to develop improvement plans to their respective schools. Further to that, UNICEF provides school grants to enable implementation of those plans. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, took to scale the implementation of the school improvement and school grants programme. The GPE committed to reach all primary education schools across Sudan and commissioned several fund tranches during 2021. UNICEF continues to explore other solutions to pressing education challenges and involves key partners to enable similar opportunities.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2021, UNICEF partnered with more than thirty local and international organisations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, 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 the 'integration and mainstreaming of refugee children into the Sudanese education

system' (IRCSES) programme implemented in South Darfur and South Kordofan. The Government of Canada provided crucial support for girls' education through the 'Strong Girls, Strong Communities' programme as well as humanitarian funding for the COVID-19 education response. The German Cooperation - through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)-KfW Development Bank - supports critical multi-year education initiatives in with a holistic, multi-partner entry-point.

Until 25 October 2021 (the date of the military takeover), UNICEF Sudan's education programme primarily delivered through the state ministries of education, which aims to build capacity, ensure sustainability, and build systems. UNICEF and state ministries of education jointly design and deliver programmes and oversee both technical and financial components of the work, including with joint monitoring. Where the government has limited scope or capacity, UNICEF partnered with local and international NGOs, especially in the areas of teacher training and delivery of ALP learning. In addition, UNICEF directly contracts in the areas of construction and rehabilitation. However, in these partnerships, UNICEF continues to also technically engage the state ministries of education to build capacity. UNICEF's value added in education is its technical expertise, which is respected by partners and government alike, as well as its reach and presence, with presence in more than 12 states, and access to hard-to-reach and marginalised areas of the country.

UNICEF Sudan generally plans its implementation with a focus to complete work by the end of quarter three, with small remaining work in quarter four. Therefore, the timing of the military takeover had just a minimal impact on year-end closures for the education team. For remaining priorities, the education team pivoted its implementation to direct supply procurement and delivery; partnering with local and international NGOs to ensure continuity of services; and through direct tendering, for example for construction and rehabilitation work at schools.

CHALLENGES

- Schools reopened after a prolonged closure in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And while access to education improved in 2021, learning loss amongst students was evident in rapid assessments and examination results, making the challenge to ensure that students are provided appropriate support and remedial education to address this a significant challenge.
- The education sector was also negatively impacted by the military takeover and subsequent political instability in the last quarter of 2021. This resulted in school closures. While schools opened within a few weeks of the takeover, periodic protests throughout the country resulted in disrupted learning.
- The overall security situation in various parts of the country, notably in West Darfur, hinder and delayed progress in achieving results for children. A number of education institutions in 2021 were impacted negatively, either being destroyed or utilised for other purposes, thereby hindering education activities.
- While the partner landscape has improved over the past few years, there still remain a limited number of technical and financial partners to advance the overall objectives under the broader Education Sector Strategic Plan for Sudan.
- Programmes were impacted by the military takeover, particularly those which involved government engagement, hindering progress in systems building.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closure provided the sector with opportunities to 'reinvent' learning. For one, the e-learning platform, Learning Passport, of which UNICEF has supported the development and implementation has been a successful model for reaching students, especially during school closures.
- UNICEF's intersectoral programming was a key success to the successful school reopening in January 2021, after a prolonged closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF's education team provided overall technical support to the school reopening and coordinated the intersectoral response, resulting in strengthened WASH programming at school-level for improved sanitation and hygiene, availability of vaccines for teachers

through the health programming, cross-sectoral support from ‘communication for development (C4D)’ for behaviour change messaging, and outreach through social media and other fora to inform education staff on COVID-19 prevention, vaccination opportunities, as well as other critical information.

- In the current context of political instability, children are especially vulnerable. To ensure sufficient agility, UNICEF Sudan conducted an operational assessment, which identified key modalities (including increasing partnerships with non-governmental organisations and direct implementation) to ensure we can stay and deliver in line with donor conditionalities and under potential government set-up(s). UNICEF continues to review its priority programmes with a focus on lifesaving, life-sustaining and resilience-building, community-based programmes.
- It is key to safeguard the humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach and ensure that systems for delivering basic social services at scale remain resilient to conflict, politics and coups. Civil servants/frontline workers – such as teachers – are the shock absorbers for continued essential service delivery at scale in the fragile context of Sudan and systems need to be put in place to ensure that resilience is maintained.

FUTURE WORK PLAN

In 2022, UNICEF Sudan will build on its past work to accelerate progress towards ensuring learning outcomes for all children in Sudan:

Access to education:

UNICEF will continue build and strengthen its partnership to drive its programme to afford all children, including the most marginalised and those in humanitarian situations, the opportunity to access quality education in formal and non-formal approaches. To improve access to education, UNICEF will continue supporting equitable access to quality primary education opportunities with emphasis on increasing intake of grade one age children (six years of age) and increasing access to education opportunities through alternative learning programmes (ALPs) for older age out-of-school children that meet their particular needs. Moreover, the education programme will intensively engage in mobilisation and outreach towards communities and learners at locality and community-level through the ‘come to school’ campaign to increase enrollment and promote retention, especially of girls living in the most remote areas and children with disabilities. 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, and map existing best practices for inclusive education in Sudan.

Building on the gains made on 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. Moreover, UNICEF will build and expand on its work in the area of digital learning, expanding access to e-learning for out-of-school children in 50 communities (aiming to reach 6,000 children through the gamification of the ALP programme).

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:

In 2022, UNICEF will focus on in-service teacher training especially for basic level teachers. UNICEF will continue to coordinate with other partners to ensure efforts are complemented with training of teachers of the intermediate level and for pre-service level. UNICEF will complement the government’s role in coordination of teacher training interventions at national

and sub-national levels. UNICEF will also aim to play a key role in the piloting and adoption of the teachers, headmasters, and supervisors competencies framework.

Furthermore, UNICEF will pilot a remedial education project. The pilot will focus on two states (in Darfur and Kordofan) but will bring several national and international partners to address the learning loss for children. The project will focus on a strong model for teachers training and mentorship, and continuous monitoring and assessment of impact for children.

UNICEF will also support the Government of Sudan to model early childhood education, through low-cost and scalable interventions. 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.

In addition, UNICEF will introduce ICT into the formal education, leveraging the software content and Learning Passport to provide quality learning opportunities for students.

Governance:

In 2022, 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. However, the policy reform work will largely depend on the political situation improvements that can lead to effective engagement with the Ministry of Education.

Priority given also to completing the work on two main strategies; the girls' education strategy and e-learning strategy. The Girls' Education Sector Strategy and subsequent roadmap and associated budget and monitoring and evaluation frameworks will lead to a more concerted approach to designing and implementing programmes specifically, targeting the inequities experienced by girls in accessing quality education. On the other hand, the e-learning strategy will guide the emerging work on e-learning, to provide coordination amongst partners, and ensure a harmonised and strategic approach to scaling-up ICT in education in Sudan.

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.

CASE STUDY: THE LEARNING PASSPORT

The Learning Passport was designed at the global level between UNICEF and Microsoft, as a solution designed to close the learning poverty gap, the Learning Passport is an online, mobile, and offline tech platform enabling high quality, flexible learning. Its mission is to enable continuous access to education for children, youth, and teachers around the world and drive improved learning outcomes through high-quality, portable education to support their entry into other education or opportunity pathways, including formal education.

The Learning Passport has been developed with a unique suite of online and offline functionalities and abilities. The platform serves local, contextualized content as well as global supplementary resources to support learners and improve learning outcomes. As an extraordinary emergency response to the global pandemic, the Learning Passport underwent rapid expansion to enable countries with a curriculum capable of being taught online to facilitate online learning. As of 20 October 2021, Sudan is the 14th country to contextualise and launch the Learning Passport globally, while another 19 countries have the Learning Passport under development.

The Learning Passport in Sudan was designed by UNICEF in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Telecommunications and Digital Transformation. The Learning Passport houses pdf versions of the government textbooks, audio-visual content, interactive learning activities, and assessments to measure learning progress. All content was developed in Sudan, in Sudanese Arabic, by Sudanese. The content is the first pillar of e-learning, which will be complemented by hardware, teacher training, and community mobilisation to ensure reach.

Accordingly, with UNICEF support, as of March 2022, the Learning Passport will be implemented in 120 e-learning centres and more than 50 formal schools, reaching more than 28,750 boys and girls. In the 2022/2023 academic year, the Learning Passport will reach more than 57,000 children, both in and out of school. The Learning Passport will continue to be updated, in terms of functionalities, targeted audience and content.



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

High in the mountains of Jebel Marra, there is a small school. In the school yard we meet hundreds of children in colourful clothes, waiting for their class to start. Although the school seems small, there are over 1,500 students enrolled. More than 100 children per classroom sit tightly packed on rocks instead of benches or chairs. Due to the large number of students, the highest grade (Grade 8) is operating on a 'double shift' basis – half of the children attend class in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. The pre-school, students are learning under the large tree in the school yard as there is not sufficient space for them.

Education as tool for change

The school was constructed in 1982 by the community itself. All teachers attended the basis school before moving to largest cities for further education and training opportunities. They decided to come back and share their knowledge with the children in their community. Most of them walk for two or more hours to reach the school and work on a voluntary basis.

'This is our community, our people, we have to sacrifice to teach our children. Illiteracy is an obstacle to the development of the community. When educated, the children have more opportunities in life and contribute in meaningful ways to society' – Ustaadh Ahmed

Education is a clear priority for the community in Gorlanbang, education, is a tool for change, a path to a better future for the children in Jebel Marra. Young Ali (9-years old) agrees: *'I need books in Arabic and English, a school uniform and a football'* he says, *'so that I can learn more about the world'*.



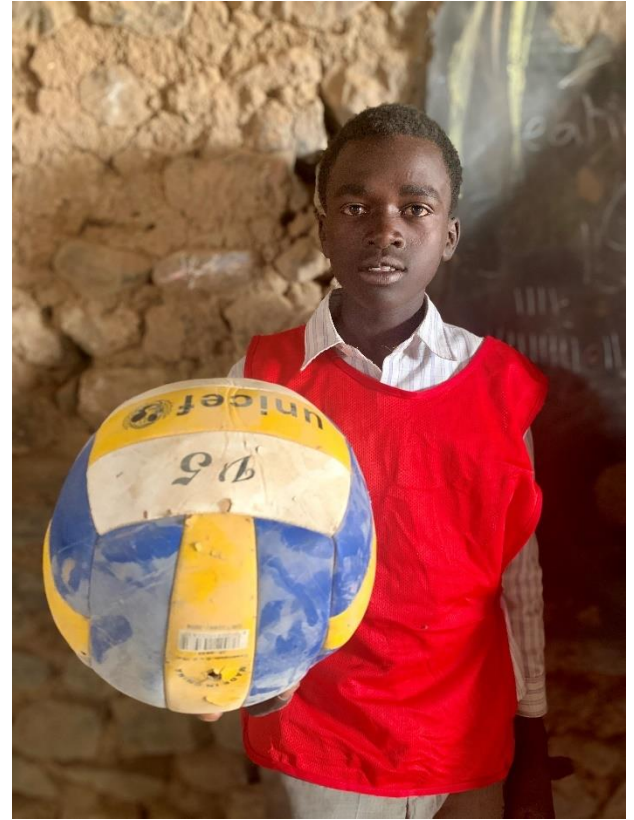
Barriers to education

There are multiple barriers to accessing education: girls marry young (as young as 10 or 11 years old) and some students come with their babies to school. Menstruation is also a reason why girls stop coming to school, especially during their period as separate toilets for girls and boys and sanitary pads are unavailable. Child labour is another challenge, with children dropping out of school to support their families on the farms or in the local market. Overall poverty is also affecting school attendance; although school is free, families tend to keep their children at home so that they can contribute to the family income.

Looking towards the future

Thanks to the generous contribution from the Muslim World League, UNICEF distributed 1,700 learning materials (school bags, notebooks, pens), as well as 'school-in-a-box' and recreational kits. UNICEF also facilitated trainings for teachers, amongst others on education-in-emergencies and teaching and learning methodologies.

The teachers valued the capacity-building trainings, especially the psychosocial aspects so that they know better how to support their students. They hope to further improve their knowledge and skills. The children on the other hand, were especially happy with the distribution of recreational materials. The recreational kits contained sport items, such as balls and shirts. Two football team have since been formed (Real Madrid, playing in blue, and Barca, playing in red). When we asked the boys what they hope for their community, their future, they said that they hope that one day a professional football team will be established in Jebel Marra.



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 2021. It was not an easy year, yet UNICEF and partners reached millions of girls and boys with lifesaving and life-sustaining 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 education 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 2021 (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
	ORR	3,607,005
	ORE	40,433,430
	Total	44,417,435
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
	ORR	3,607,005
	ORE	0
	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
	ORR	1,803,502
	ORE	0
	Total	1,992,002
Total	RR	942,500
	OR	9,017,512
	ORE	40,433,430
	Total	50,393,442

TABLE TWO: Thematic contributions received for education in 2021 (in US dollar)

Donors	Grant Number*	Contribution Amount (USD)	Programmable Amount (USD)
SIDA - Sweden	SC1899040102	898,335	839,565
Total		898,335	839,565

TABLE THREE: Thematic expenses for education in 2021 (in US dollars)

Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Emergency	334,454
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	321,990
22-02 Learning outcomes	12,462
22-03 Skills development	3
Other Resources - Regular	2,217,210
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	1,952,432
22-02 Learning outcomes	250,779
22-03 Skills development	13,999
Grand Total	2,551,664

TABLE FOUR: Expenses for education in 2021 (in US dollars)

Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Emergency	6,723,185
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	4,935,561
22-02 Learning outcomes	1,710,779
22-03 Skills development	76,845
Other Resources - Regular	7,148,502
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	4,892,466
22-02 Learning outcomes	2,166,356
22-03 Skills development	89,681
Regular Resources	517,318
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	364,697
22-02 Learning outcomes	151,934
22-03 Skills development	687
Grand Total	14,389,005

TABLE FIVE: Expenses by specific intervention codes in 2021 (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)	37,491
22-01-03 Provision of (formal and non-formal) primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	6,523,521
22-01-05 Provision of (formal and non-formal) multiple-levels or alternative pathways of education (including in temporary learning spaces)	971,874
22-01-06 System strengthening - inclusive education for children with disabilities	13
22-01-07 System strengthening - inclusive education for other vulnerable children poorest quintile, ethnic/linguistic minorities, migrant children, non-citizens/undocumented children etc.	164,737
22-01-08 System strengthening - risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	561,492
22-01-09 Peacebuilding education	7,668
22-01-10 System strengthening - gender-responsive access (excluding SRGBV)	3,857
22-01-11 Other activities for equitable access to quality education e.g., school feeding, school grants	95,755
22-01-12 Education analyses including OOSCI, Education Sector Analyses, etc.	93,777
22-01-13 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	1,715
22-01-14 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	109,616
22-01-15 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	55,343
22-01-99 Technical assistance - Equitable access to quality education	109,761
22-02-01 Provision or procurement of early learning / pre-primary education learning materials	2
22-02-02 Provision or procurement of primary education learning materials	661,527
22-02-03 Provision or procurement of secondary education learning materials	52,240
22-02-07 Provision of early learning / pre-primary education teacher training	122,523
22-02-08 Provision of primary education teacher training	1,500,187
22-02-12 Provision of training of school communities e.g., parent teacher associations, school management committees	533,825

22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary policy, leadership, and budget	2,484
22-02-15 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary standards and governance	2,838
22-02-17 System strengthening - curricula and learning materials design (excluding early learning / pre-primary)	4,273
22-02-20 System strengthening - teacher development, management, and support	11
22-02-21 System strengthening - community participation and social accountability, e.g., school management committees	58,704
22-02-24 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	593
22-02-25 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	5,136
22-02-99 Technical assistance - Learning outcomes	323,923
22-03-02 Provision of skills development for adolescents (10-19 year-olds) (including in temporary learning spaces)	8,599
22-03-03 Provision of skills development for multiple age groups (including in temporary learning spaces)	48,907
22-03-06 System strengthening - gender equitable skills development (excluding SRGBV)	86,822
26-01-02 Programme reviews (Annual, UNDAF, MTR, etc.)	4,468
26-01-03 Humanitarian planning and review activities (HRP, RRP, UNICEF HAC)	-694
26-02-01 Situation Analysis or Update on women and children	2,802
26-02-02 MICS - General	33
26-02-03 Data architecture and use	833
26-02-04 Stimulating demand for and capacity to use data	
26-02-06 Analysis of data	72
26-02-07 Data dissemination	2,326
26-02-08 Programme monitoring	41,238
26-02-09 Field monitoring	113,578
26-03-01 Advocacy and partnership-building for social behaviour change	624
26-03-03 Children, adolescent and youth engagement and participation	630
26-03-04 Community engagement, participation and accountability	91,213
26-03-06 Research, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management for C4D	2,329
26-03-07 Strengthening C4D in Government systems including preparedness for humanitarian action	120,797
26-03-99 Technical assistance - Cross - sectoral communication for development	27,230
26-05-05 Evaluation innovation learning, uptake and partnerships for evaluation	2,691
26-05-11 Building global / regional / national stakeholder research capacity	118
26-06-04 Leading advocate	120,910
26-06-06 Supporter engagement	103,022
26-07-01 Operations support to programme delivery	699,339
27-01-06 HQ and RO technical support to multiple Goal Areas	952
27-01-15 CO programme coordination	4,926
27-01-16 CO advocacy and communication	62,516
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at CO	837,836
Grand Total	14,389,005

TABLE SIX: Planned budget for 2022 (in USD) *

Output	Funding type	planned budget	funded budget	shortfall
Output 3.1: Access to Education	RR	377,000	122,509	254,491
	ORR	3,878,500	5,462,094	-1,583,594
	ORE	40,433,430	3,692,529	36,740,901
	Total	44,417,435	9,277,132	35,140,303
Output 3.2: Learning Outcomes	RR	377,000	0	377,000
	ORR	3,878,500	9,427,273	-5,548,773
	ORE	0	1,691,429	-1,691,429
	Total	4,255,500	11,118,702	-6,863,202
Output 3.3: System Strengthening/Policy	RR	188,500	190,168	-1,668
	ORR	1,939,250	884,936	1,054,314
	ORE	0	11,602	-11,602
	Total	2,127,750	1,086,706	1,041,044
Output 4: Technical Support	RR	292,620	271,418	21,202
	ORR	2,457,880	429,098	2,028,782
	ORE	416,898	782,612	-365,714
	Total	3,167,398	1,483,128	1,684,270
Education total	RR	1,235,120	584,095	651,025
	ORR	12,154,130	16,203,401	-4,049,271
	ORE	40,850,328	6,178,172	34,672,156
	Total	54,239,578	22,965,668	31,273,910

*All expenses are provisional and subject to change

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