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# Sudan

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## Principles and general objectives of education

Education in Sudan has the following general directives: to provide equilibrium of character by satisfying physical, spiritual and intellectual needs and inculcating good conduct and cooperation to enable each member of the society to fulfill his/her role in life; to assert the respect of humanity in the social system through empowerment of the learner with the knowledge that enables him/her to know his/her rights and duties and to act accordingly, and to be self-reliant in the acquisition of knowledge; to develop a spirit of patriotism and caring for Sudan's cultural heritage together with awareness of the cultural links with African, Arab and Islamic nations.

The objectives of general education as stated in the 1992 Education Act and the educational strategy are as follows:

- to instill in the young people religious ideas, beliefs and morals, and social values so as to build a responsible character;
- to develop the thinking abilities of learners through experience and science and to strengthen their bodies by physical education;
- to encourage self-esteem and national pride and to develop a sense of patriotism and loyalty within an improved spirit of national unity;
- to build up a self-reliant community and to activate the spiritual and material energies and encourage ambition;
- to encourage creativity and to build up the individual's abilities and skills through technological training so as to fulfill the goals of comprehensive development;
- to develop environmental awareness and promote the preservation of natural resources.

Article 25 of the Child Act, Provisional Decree of 2004, stipulates that education of the child shall aim at: ensuring his/her religious, moral, emotional, patriotic and spiritual upbringing and his/her scientific, physical and cultural formation; building him/her a character that shall worship Allah in freedom, responsibility and belief; making him/her aware of his heritage and rehabilitation of him/herself by implanting in him/her the love for his/her motherland, his/her people and the entire humanity; making him/her aware of advantages of goodness, peace, cooperation and devotion; and building his/her capacity to the extent of making him/her capable of effective contribution towards all aspects of development on the basis of equal opportunities.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The General Education Organization Act of 1992 covered general education objectives, examination regulations, educational policies and general administration. According to this Act, approved curricula must be applied nationwide; Arabic is the



language of instruction and religious education is compulsory. The **General Education Planning and Organization Act** of 2001 abrogated the Education Act of 1992; it stipulates the right to education for all children of eligible school age without any discrimination.

The **Basic Education School Regulation** of 1992 concerns pupils' affairs such as: rules of intake, class size, school uniform and general conduct; the duties of head teachers and deputies; rewards and punishments based on religious values; educational and out-of-school activities; modalities concerning examinations, promotion and repetition, etc.

The **Secondary Education School Regulation** of 1992 governs students affairs such as: intake rules and committees; rewards and punishments; regulations concerning examination, promotion, repetition and dismissal; school administration and the functions and duties of the staff; boarding regulations, specifying the duties of supervisors; educational activities; etc.

By virtue of the **Council of Ministers Resolution No. 1799** of 1990 the preschool stage has become an integral part of the formal education system.

The **Higher Education Act** of 1990 specifies aims and goals, curricula and programmes, the various types of higher education institutions and their objectives. Through this Act, Arabic has been designated the language of instruction at the higher education level.

The **National Council for Literacy and Adult Education Act** of 1991 concerns all issues related to literacy programmes.

The **National Centre for Curricula and Educational Research Act** of 1996 states the responsibilities of the centre in the fields of curriculum development, encouraging educational research, and strengthening links with educational institutions, both regionally and internationally.

The **Parent-Teacher Associations Regulation** of 1992 aims at strengthening the relation between the school, families and society and defines the rights and duties of parent/teacher associations.

The **School Health Act** of 1974 defines the general policy for the school health services and student health insurance.

In 2003 a bylaw was issued to regulate non-governmental education, abrogating the 1997 bylaw, stipulating among other that schools within this sector can add extra material to the national curriculum and teach the approved translation of the national syllabus in English.

The **Child Act, Provisional Decree** of 2004, drafted by the National Council for Child Welfare, stipulates that the state shall guarantee the welfare and protection of children and shall endeavour to create circumstances conducive to child overall and proper upbringing within the framework of freedom, human dignity and spiritual and



social values and in a healthy environment. A new (federal) Child Act has been endorsed in 2010.

The **Ministerial Resolution No. 5** of 2004 was issued in order to reform technical secondary education, providing for the establishment of a High Level Committee. The Committee has made the following recommendations: to issue an Act for the creation of a National Council for Technical and Technological Education; to rehabilitate schools and colleges; to increase the share of education expenditure so as to reach at least 3% of GDP; and to encourage the private sector to invest in technical and technological education.

The introduction of compulsory education at the basic stage, initially planned for 1995, was effective in 1998. (MOGE, 1999).

Article 27 the Child Act, Provisional Decree of 2004, stipulates that free education in the basic stage shall be a fundamental right guaranteed by the State to every child having attained the age of 6 years. Article 13 of the **Interim National Constitution** of 2005 indicates that the State shall promote education at all levels all over Sudan and shall ensure free and compulsory education at the primary level and in illiteracy eradication programmes. Article 44 states that education is a right for every citizen and the State shall provide access to education without discrimination as to religion, race, ethnicity, gender or disability; primary education is compulsory and the State shall provide it free.

Article 28 of the new Child Act of 2010 stipulates that: every child shall have the right to general education; the State shall provide the capabilities for availing the chances of the compulsory basic education, free of charge; the State shall endeavour to provide education free of charge, at the government secondary schools, for orphans, and the disabled and those of unknown parents; the State shall endeavour to include in the educational curricula, the following: spiritual and religious instruction; national instruction; and principles of human rights.

## **Administration and management of the education system**

The cultural, racial and religious diversity in Sudan, in addition to its vast area, led to the adoption of federalism as the best mode for its government. Nine states were initially established in 1991 matching the former nine provinces that had existed since 1948. The country was further reorganized into 26 states (*wilayaat*) in 1994, each with its parliament and government.

Following the results of a referendum held in January 2011, the Republic of South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011. It comprises ten states, further divided into counties, corresponding to three southern regions of Sudan, e.g. Greater Upper Nile (covering three states), Equatoria (three states) and Bahr el Ghazal (four states). The Republic of Sudan currently comprises 15 states further divided into districts. The Darfur Regional Authority acts as coordinating body for the states of the region. The Eastern Sudan State Coordinating Council ensures enhanced cooperation between three eastern states. The Abyei Area, on the border between Sudan and South Sudan, has a special administrative status.



According to the Interim National Constitution of 2005, the federal government (Government of National Unity) is responsible for planning, coordination, training foreign relations, security and defence whereas the state governments are concerned with executive functions, in addition to participation through certain channels in planning, while the localities are responsible of delivering social services. The adoption of a federal system in 1994 created a decentralized three-tier system of general education: *mahalyas* (localities), state ministries of education, and the federal ministry of education. In general, responsibility for formal pre-secondary and secondary education lies with the first and second tier, respectively. However, the federal ministry is responsible for planning, policy, training, educational research, curriculum development, monitoring the quality of instruction and learning, and coordination of state ministries of education. (UNESCO, 2008). The Interim Constitution indicates that the states shall be responsible for the administration and management of primary and secondary schools.

According to the Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2001 the Federal Ministry of Education (the **Federal Ministry of General Education** according to the 1992 Education Act) is responsible for: educational planning and formulation of general educational plans; coordination between the educational authorities at both the central and state levels; preparation and development of general education curricula; literacy, adult and special education; coordinating the training of teachers and educational administrators with higher education institutions and the state's ministries; technical supervision of private education in coordination with the states; formulation of policies and development of indicators for educational evaluation and the administration and evaluation of the Secondary School Certificate examinations; and the establishment and running of schools for Sudanese communities abroad. The states are responsible for: the establishment of general education institutions in their territories according to federal plans; authorizing the establishment of the non-governmental schools; and supervising the basic education certificate examinations. Each state has its own minister of education and director-general of education.

“The Federal Ministry directs policy development in three key areas: secondary school certification, the qualification framework for teachers, and development of the basic and secondary education curricula. Policies related to human resource management and certification for basic education fall under the purview of the state government. Further, the states and *mahalyas* (localities) are responsible for the delivery of preschool, basic, and secondary education.” (World Bank, 2012).

At the beginning of the 2000s, the administrative structure of the Federal Ministry consisted of six general directorates: educational planning; training; examinations and evaluation; qualifying and training of school leavers; students' activities; and coordination, administration and financial affairs. The 1992 Education Act also provided for the establishment of a National Council as an advisory body to the Ministry. “The National Council for General Education approves the plans of the Federal Ministry and then the Council of Ministers ratifies the strategy to be implemented by federal, state, and local governments. States develop plans that are submitted to the Federal Ministry for incorporation into a national strategic plan. Based on the five-year strategic plan, annual work plans and budgets are developed at the national and state levels. There are nine general directorates and 49 specialist directorates within the Federal Ministry. The general directorates include: educational



planning; technical education; educational external relations; services and administrative affairs; information centre; media and public relations; educational training and qualifications; examinations; and student activities.” (World Bank, 2012).

In addition, there are several national bodies under the direct supervision of the Federal Ministry: the **National Centre for Curricula and Educational Research (NCCER)**; the **Tarbia Corporation for Printing and Publication**; the **National Council for Literacy and Adult Education**; and the **National Centre for Languages**. The NCCER is entrusted with the responsibility to perform the following tasks: to develop the national curriculum for the basic stage and secondary stage of school education in accordance with the national policy; to provide training to the educational personnel in curriculum development and educational research; to promote educational research in collaboration with national universities and research centers and find support for this; to establish linkages with educational institutions and research centres, both at the regional and international level; and to collaborate with universities and research centres in publishing and documenting educational research. (Arora, 2003).

Higher education remains the responsibility of the central government through the **Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research** (separated from the FMOE in 1995), which is also responsible *inter alia* for the pre-service training of general education teachers. Basic and secondary school teachers are recruited by the individual states. The **National Council for Higher Education** is responsible for the implementation of the government’s policies in this field. The Council is headed by the federal Minister of Higher Education, assisted by the vice-chancellors of universities and other prominent educators. The **Evaluation and Accreditation Commission**, within the Ministry of Higher Education, is responsible for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education.

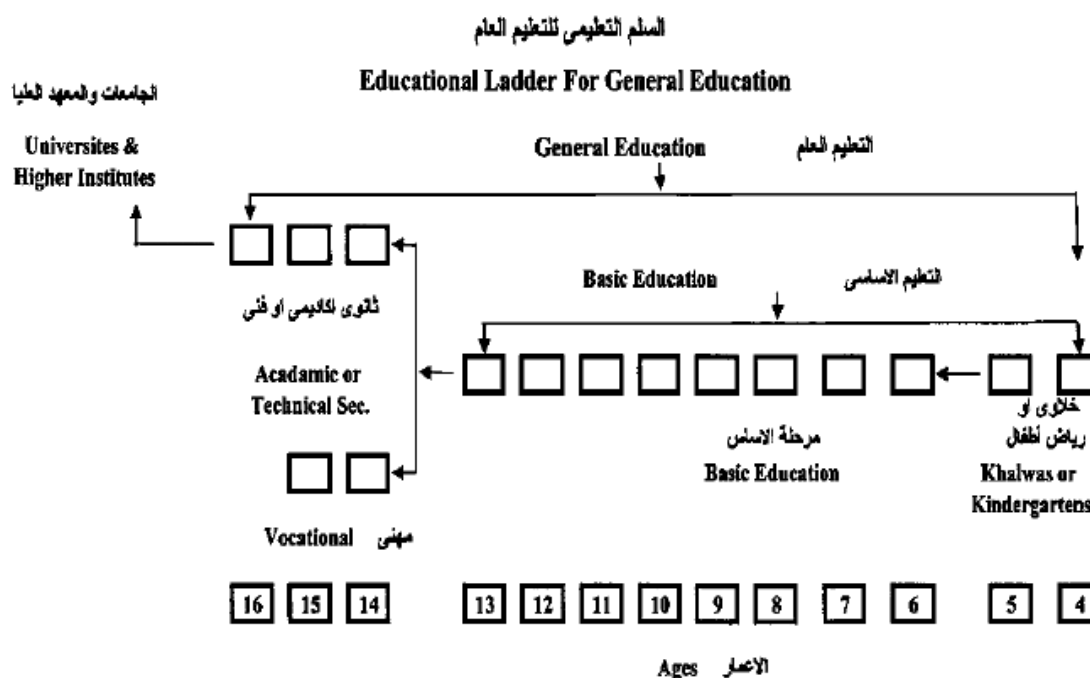
The **Directorates of Education** in localities are responsible for preschool and basic education including school infrastructure, teacher recruitment and management. **Education Councils** and **Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)** ensure community participation at the school level in areas such as school supervision, maintenance, and housing for teachers. State governments are responsible for secondary education while higher education comes under the purview of the federal government. (World Bank, 2009).

Several other federal ministries play a considerable role in the field of education, including: the **Ministry of Welfare and Social Security**, which coordinates educational activities for the homeless, the orphans and the disabled; the **Ministry of the Interior**, which is involved in educational programmes for refugees; and the **Ministry of Health**, which is involved in school health programmes and immunization campaigns.

The **Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development** offers apprenticeships and vocational training programmes through private enterprises, NGOs, and the public sector. The **National Council for Technical and Technological Education** was established in December 2005 to consolidate all programmes dealing with technical and vocational education under one accreditation body. (World Bank, 2012).

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Sudan: structure of the general education system



Source: Federal Ministry of General Education, 2008.

### Pre-school education

Children join preschool education at age 4. Preschool education is offered by kindergartens and traditional Islamic schools (*khalwas*), it lasts two years and is neither free nor compulsory. *Khalwas* accept children of all ages.

### Primary education (basic education)

Children are admitted to basic education school at the age of 6. Basic education lasts eight years (grades 1 to 8) and is compulsory since 1998. In 1992, the former 6-3-3 system (adopted in the 1970s) with admission to school at age 7, was replaced by eight years of basic education followed by three years of secondary education, lowering the school entry age to 6 years. Basic education is divided into three stages: grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7 to 8. More than 50% of schools are co-educational. At the end of grade 8 pupils sit the final exams and if successful receive the basic education certificate.

### Secondary education

General secondary education lasts three years, leading to the Sudan School Certificate (SSC) examination. In the first two years students follow the same curriculum; in the final year, students choose between the arts and science streams. Government secondary schools are not co-educational. Technical secondary education also lasts three years and is offered by technical and vocational schools in four main fields (agriculture, commerce, industry and home economics for girls). At the end of the

programme students sit the SSC examination. Vocational training centres offer two-year vocational courses to basic education graduates in a variety of fields.

## Higher education

Higher education is offered by universities, higher education institutes and colleges. Admission to undergraduate degree programmes is based upon the results in the Sudan School Certificate examination. Higher education institutions offer diploma and degree programmes in several fields. Technical colleges and some universities as well offer professional diploma programmes lasting four to six semesters. Bachelor's degree programmes generally last four years (five years in the case of honors degrees); programmes leading to a professional degree normally take five to six years to complete. Postgraduate diploma programmes generally last one or two years after the bachelor's degree and are only offered in certain disciplines. Programmes leading to a master's degree last two or three years and require some independent research and the submission of a thesis. The duration of doctoral degree programmes is at least three years after the master's degree; students must undertake an independent research and present a final thesis. Higher doctorates are only available at the University of Khartoum in the fields of humanities, law and science.

The school year at all levels of general education consists of 210 working days divided into two semesters. The length of the school year as well as the timing of the secondary school examination, are determined by the Federal Ministry of General Education. It is then left to the individual states to decide upon the suitable school calendar. According to the baseline survey carried out in 2007, in the school year 2006/07, only 46% of schools met the stipulated official number of school days. This may be attributed to a number of reasons including the conflicts, nomadic type of living, natural disasters, training and examination of teachers attending the Open University programme or other learning opportunities and engagement in farming and animal breeding. (FMGE, 2008). The 2009 basic education service delivery study in Kassala, North Kordofan, and River Nile states showed students receiving fewer instructional hours than the official policy; it showed incomplete syllabus coverage as well. The official school year in northern Sudan is 210 days, but in the sample schools in the three states, the average number of actual school days was 189. (World Bank, 2012).

## The educational process

The National Centre for Curriculum and Educational Research (NCCER) changes and adapts educational content in collaboration with university teachers, scientific institutions and education experts.

The Centre develops the curricula according to the national policy; trains and qualifies educational professionals to carry out research; and promotes relations with educational institutions and research centres. The Centre also prepares detailed plans of school programmes; develops textbooks and teacher guides; appoints and supervises textbook writing committees; prepare legislation for organizing the curricula and examinations at all levels of education; and determines achievement levels by reviewing school examinations.





In order to design, implement, follow-up and evaluate the new curriculum introduced in 1996, the earlier curriculum of 1992 was evaluated and analyzed through field visits and direct communication. Committees were formed to evaluate the old curriculum; their findings were presented to a technical conference composed of experts and specialists who were to define the general characteristics of the new curriculum. The specialized technical committees then prepared the items of the curriculum, which were presented to the authors, technical lay-out committees and revising committees for approval.

The new basic education curriculum was implemented in the first cycle of primary school (grades 1 to 3) in 1996/97. More emphasis was given to practical aspects and life skills. Population, environment and health education have also been introduced. The new curriculum discarded the subject-oriented approach to focus on thematic, integrated areas of learning such as 'man and the universe'. The implementation of curriculum requires urgent attention. In theory, participatory approaches to teaching, activity-based teaching, cooperative teaching, and child-to-child teaching are emphasized but teachers seldom make use of such approaches in their classrooms. Teacher guides are made available to the teachers but they generally do not take note of the methods suggested in these guides. (Arora, 2003).

“The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 has necessitated the development of a national curriculum framework that addresses the multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious context of Sudan. The NCCER, which is responsible for all aspects of developing and supporting the national curriculum framework for basic and secondary education, is currently undertaking an assessment of the curriculum across Sudan in order to propose a framework for developing a new curriculum in line with the requirements of the CPA. Curriculum development for preschools and schools for internally displaced persons is the responsibility of the state ministries of education. Nomadic schools operate with the same curriculum as that used in regular schools. With the assistance of UNICEF, a comprehensive life skills curriculum was also introduced in 2008 and is being implemented across schools. The life skills curriculum includes developing self-confidence and dealing with conflict, HIV/AIDS, and gender issues. In secondary education, there are nine core subjects including Arabic, Islamic studies, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, and history. Optional subjects include computers, agricultural and animal protection, commercial science, family studies, military studies, and engineering studies.” (World Bank, 2012).

### Pre-primary education

Preschool education is offered by kindergartens and traditional Islamic schools (*khalwas*) that teach the Quran. Children join preschool education at the age of 4. Preschool education lasts two years and is neither free nor compulsory. *Khalwas* accept children of all ages. Preschool education is considered as part of basic education. (FMGE, 2008).

Preschool education provides play activities that suit the children, aiming at their overall development—intellectual, emotional, physical and social—in the cultural context, and at increasing their vocabulary and intellectual skills for successful schooling. Preschool education is highly decentralized and each state



follows its own model in accordance with the above-mentioned general objectives and goals. The curriculum normally includes the following aspects covering the major areas of children's development: Islamic values, including the Quran and moral values; language skills; arithmetical skills; social skills; scientific knowledge; motor skills; and aesthetic skills.

Children usually attend preschool institutions eighteen to twenty-four hours per week. Activities are organized in the form of integrated units lasting five to fifteen minutes. Children's performance is continuously evaluated through direct observation; there is a final evaluation at the end of the programme.

The average gross enrolment rate (GER) of children aged 4-5 years was estimated at 20% (30% in the northern states) by the end of the 1990s. (MOGE, 1999).

The policy of the Government of National Unity is to have a kindergarten attached to every basic school. The findings of the baseline survey carried out in 2007 show that 40% of the schools have kindergartens attached to them. Only 42.9% of pupils in grade 1 gained admission after having completed two years of preschool education. Khartoum state ranks first with 74%, followed by Northern (72%) and Algazeera (66%), the other states range from 25 to 53%. In most states, the majority of pupils in grade 1 have not completed preschool education. Northern and Khartoum states have higher percentages of children who have completed pre-schooling actually admitted, mainly because there is higher private sector participation in preschool education. (FMGE, 2008).

According to the statistics of the Ministry of General Education, in 2006/07 there were 10,695 institutions offering preschool education (*khalwas* and kindergartens); the total enrolment was 506,008 children (of whom 251,677 were girls) and the number of teachers was 28,185. (CBS, 2009; data refer to 18 states).

In the school year 2008/09, there were 13,657 preschool institutions and the total enrolment in northern Sudan (e.g. in 15 states) was 725,113 children, of whom 595,057 in kindergartens and 130,056 in *khalwas*. The total number of teachers was 22,990. Girls made up 47% of preschool enrolments. The overall GER was estimated at 37%. There are large disparities across states, with the GER spanning from a minimum of 13% (Sinnar state) to a maximum of 64-65% (River Nile, Northern and Red Sea states). In the Khartoum state the GER was estimated at 43% in 2008/09. (World Bank, 2012).

“Enrolments in preschool have outpaced the also rapid increase in the number of schools, leading to moderately larger schools and higher children-teacher ratios. Despite a rapid expansion in the number of schools at this level, enrolments in the average preschool have grown from 49 children in 2004/05 to 53 children in 2008/09. The average national children-teacher ratio for preschool has also increased and is now 32:1. At the preschool level, nongovernment schools—which include the *khalwas* as well as fee-charging private schools—enrol as many as 38% of all children. With regard to 13 states, at the preschool level government teachers account for 62% of total staff, and national service and volunteer teachers account for 33%.” (*Ibid.*).



## Primary education (basic education)

Basic education lasts eight years (grades 1 to 8) and is compulsory since 1998. The official admission age is 6 years. In 1992, the former 6-3-3 system (adopted in the 1970s) with admission to school at age 7, was replaced by eight years of basic education followed by three years of secondary education, lowering the school entry age to 6 years. Basic education is divided into three stages: grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7 to 8. At the end of grade 8 pupils sit the final exams and if successful receive the basic education certificate.

The baseline survey of 2007 confirmed that the government is the largest provider of basic education. Whereas in Khartoum state the share of private sector is the highest (28%) followed by South Darfur (6%), Red Sea (5%) and South Kordofan (4%), the private sector participation in the remaining states is much lower and varies between 1% and 2.4%. Two of the states with more than 5% of private sector participation in education are the economic hubs of the country. The overall percentage of schools for boys is 23.3% and for girls it is 22.4%; the other schools are co-educational. The distribution of the sample by mode of schooling shows that on average 78% of the schools are regular schools, 11% are village schools, 6% are nomadic schools, 4% are for internally displaced persons (IDP), and 1% are religious schools. A large proportion of IDP schools are found in the areas affected by conflict in Western and South Darfur with 24% and 13% respectively. Village schools are found mainly in Algezeera state (27.1%), and Kassala (22%). Data also showed that although the official entry age to grade 1 is 6 years, pupils older than 6 years are also admitted late. The survey showed that 51% of the classrooms either need to be renovated or replaced, in almost all the states. About 50% of children attending school had no desks to sit on. The lack of seating is worse in grade 1 than the overall seating situation. Twelve of the 15 states had 20% or more of their grade 1 children unseated. Of these states, eight of them had 40% or more of their children unseated. Furthermore, 83% of the schools had no telephone services; 77% of the schools had no first aid services; only 42.3% of schools had playgrounds; 93.4% of the schools were without computers and only 59% of the schools had shaded areas. The schools benefiting from some school feeding programmes were only 23.7% of the total schools. (FMGE, 2008).

The curriculum of basic education concentrates on the development of skills in language, mathematics, arts and handicrafts, and broadening the mental and social abilities of the pupils.

The curriculum includes five main core areas (religion, language, mathematics, man and the universe, and applied arts), and for each thematic areas a number of skills, attitudes and cognitive objectives have been defined. The Arabic language is the main medium of instruction. The use of local languages, if needed, is allowed.

The weekly lesson timetable of basic education in 2001 (used mainly in northern Sudan) is shown in the table below:

### Sudan. Basic education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First stage			Second stage			Third stage	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Quran	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Islamic religious education (*)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Arabic language	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Mathematics	–	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
English language	–	–	–	–	3	3	7	7
School environment	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Man and Universe (**)	–	–	–	4	4	4	–	–
Science	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4
History and geography	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	3
Health and nutrition	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3
Applied & expressive arts (**)	5	5	5	4	4	4	–	–
Physical education	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>

*Source:* Arora, 2003. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes plus five minutes in between for the pupils to prepare themselves for the coming lesson. (\*) In grades 1-8, pupils may opt for Christian religious education (six weekly periods) instead of Quran and Islamic religious education. (\*\*) 'Man and Universe' is an integrated area of learning which draws its content from science, history, geography and environmental studies; 'Applied and expressive arts' comprises fine arts, crafts and performing arts like music.

The evaluation of pupils' performance includes classroom tests, periodic tests, examinations at the end of the school year for promotion to the next grade, and the basic education certificate examination for transition to the secondary level. Pupils sit the examination at the end of grade 8. Certificates are awarded to those who pass the examination with 50% minimum score. In 1995, approximately 475,000 pupils sat the examination and the pass rate was about 65%.

Available data on the results of basic education certificate examinations reveal significant regional variations in the pass rate. Thus, while the average pass rate for 1998 was 60.8%, it was below 40% in south Kordofan. In 2004/05 examinations, the pass rate varied between 98.3% for Northern state and 55.2% for Northern Darfur state. The low examination pass rate is directly linked with the poor curriculum relevance. In Northern Sudan's scheme of examination for basic education, religion, Arabic and English have more weighting than other subjects, including science and mathematics. The curriculum policy seriously needs to be reformed to respond to cultural relevance and holistic development and be more flexible to address science and technology advancement. In 1998, the pass rate for mathematics was 21.4% compared to 86.8% for Islamic religion. (UNESCO, 2008). In 2006/07, the average pass rate in the 15 northern states was 71.2% (72% for girls and 70.5% for boys). In nine of the 15 states girls performed better than boys. (FMGE, 2008).

The education policy is that children should be promoted automatically until they reach grade 4. Thereafter, two chances should be given for repetition for the remaining grades. Children are discouraged from dropping out of school through the provision of various incentives. The 2007 baseline survey showed that the rate of



promotion is significantly high in all grades. The average rate of promotion for grade 1 to grade 4 for both sexes was 90.4% while the dropout rate was 7.6 %. The repetition rate was low at 2.1 %. Repetition and dropout affect the years input per graduate which is 10.3 pupil years. The average repetition rate among boys was higher than that of the girls in all grades. It was also observed that the highest repetition rate among boys is in grade 4; and for girls in grades 2 and 4 although the repetition rate tends to decrease for both sexes from grade 4 upwards. The findings also showed that the overall dropout rate averaged for primary classes (grades 1 to 5) was higher among girls than that for the boys (8.1% for girls vs. 7.1% for boys). It was observed that the average dropout rate for boys is higher than girls in all grades except in grades 3 and 4. The highest dropout rate among boys was in grades 6 and 7 (14.5% and 13.3%); while the highest dropout rate for girls was in grade 4 (13.3%). (*Ibid.*).

The Sudan Household Health Survey (SHHS) carried out in 2006 showed that nationwide, only 53.7% of children of primary school age were attending school at the time of the survey. The primary school net attendance rate (NAR) for boys was 55.7% compared to 51.7% for girls. The NAR was only 19.4% among children belonging to the poorest households compared to 92.9% among children from the richest households. There were considerable variations in the NAR among states, e.g. from a minimum of 4.3% to a maximum of 91.1%. More than a third of secondary school age children were found to be attending primary (basic) school when they should be attending secondary school. Nationwide, of all the children starting grade 1 about 90.3% of them (91.3% of boys and 89.1% of girls) eventually reach grade 5. The percentage was 96.3 for children from the richest households compared to 80 among children from the poorest households. At the time of the survey, only 19.4% of the children of primary completion age (13 years) were attending the last grade of primary/basic education. Concerning the transition rate to secondary education in the 15 northern states, about 64.5% of the children who completed primary/basic education had joined secondary schools, ranging from a minimum of 32.3% (Kassala state) to a maximum of 94.4% (River Nile state). The transition rate to secondary education was 77.9% for children from the richest households compared to 31.3% among children from the poorest households. (GoNU & GoSS, 2007; unless otherwise indicated data refer to both northern and southern states).

In 1995, the average number of pupils per class was 46 at the national level, with significant variations across the states and between rural and urban areas—e.g. 86 students per class in Sinner state compared to 36 in River Nile state. The average pupil-teacher ratio was 29:1 in 1998, and 27:1 in 1999/2000. The overall enrolment rate was estimated at 52.2% in 1999. (MOGE, 1999).

The enrolment figures available for all of the 15 northern states for the year 2006/07 indicate that the total enrolment in basic education (excluding preschool education) was 4,237,907 pupils (of whom 1,912,933 were girls). The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for the northern states was reported to be 68.3% (74.9% for boys and 61.8% for girls). There are significant disparities among states: the GER in the River Nile state was at 88.2% (82.3% girls and 94.1% boys), while it was 46.4% (36.9% girls, 55.9% boys) in Kassala and 51.4% (44.2% girls and 58.6% boys) in South Kordofan. The total number of teachers was 145,999, of whom 91,777 were female teachers. The average pupils–teacher ratio was 1:35, and the average class size



was 45 pupils per class (however, the class size could exceed more than 100 pupils especially in urban areas). The percentage of trained teachers in basic education was estimated at 66.3%. According to the 2007 baseline survey findings, only 17.3% working teachers had graduate and postgraduate level qualification. The majority (72.8%) had only completed secondary education; 41.8% of teachers had not benefited from any type of professional in-service training. (FMGE, 2008).

An estimated 179,444 children (54% boys, 46% girls) in displaced communities were in school in 2006/07. They are mostly in the North, West and South Darfur states. This type of education depends mostly on volunteer teachers from civil society organizations. In nomadic schools, basic education services are provided up to the fourth grade. The number of schools reached 1,285 in 2006/07 with a total enrolment of 134,138 pupils. (*Ibid.*).

In 2008/09, there were 16,290 primary/basic education schools (including 1,335 private schools as well as village, nomadic and IDP schools) and the total enrolment in northern Sudan was 4,870,464 pupils; girls made up 46% of enrolments. The total number of teachers was 147,833. An additional 39,752 pupils were enrolled in special education. In the same year, 8.7% of basic schools in northern Sudan were nomadic, 2.1% were village schools (a total of 338 schools with 32,757 pupils enrolled), and 1.6% were IDP. IDP schools are large, with an average of 92 students per class; there were 261 IDP schools in 2008/09, with a total enrolment of 212,602 pupils. Nomadic schools, on the other hand, are smaller, multigrade schools; their number was 1,422 in 2008/09, with 146,826 pupils enrolled. Among these vulnerable groups, the share of girls in basic education is smaller than that in regular schools. The share of girls in nomadic schools is 38% and in IDP schools, 44% compared with 47% in regular government schools. According to the Federal Ministry, nomadic schools are divided into mobile, multigrade schools for grades 1-4 and collective schools for grades 5-8. Village schools are small, multigrade, and rural, and they are located primarily in the Kordofan states. More than 10% of schools in North and South Kordofan are multigrade village schools. Village schools offer only the first grades of the basic education cycle, up to grade 4 in North Kordofan and grade 5 in South Kordofan. The GER for basic education was estimated at 72% in 2008/09; there are large disparities in the GER across states. Only about 54% of children completed the basic cycle (61% completed the first six years). The transition rate to secondary education was 74%. It is estimated that about 1 million youth between ages 10 and 17 in northern Sudan have never attended basic school. (World Bank, 2012).

## Secondary education

General secondary education lasts three years, leading to the Sudan School Certificate (SSC) examination. In the first two years students follow the same curriculum; in the final year, students choose between the arts and science streams. Government secondary schools are not co-educational. Technical secondary education also lasts three years and is offered by technical and vocational schools in four main fields (agriculture, commerce, industry and home economics for girls). At the end of the programme students sit the SSC examination. Vocational training centres offer two-year vocational courses to basic education graduates in a variety of fields.



Secondary education prepares students to continue their education or to join the labour market. Students are given wider options at this stage to enable them to discover their abilities and interests. Environmental education studies have been introduced together with social studies, mathematics and languages (Arabic, English and French). The curriculum is based on the integration of knowledge and linked to the cultural heritage of the Sudanese nation. It provides the students with skills, general culture, knowledge and a scientific way of thinking. The curriculum also concentrates on the building of the integral character by allotting more time for practical training.

Students have to choose a minimum of three or a maximum of five electives out of the following: additional mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, optional Arabic language, geography, history, English literature, environmental studies, Islamic studies, French language and arts.

Students' evaluation follows the same modalities as in basic education. Students sit the SSC examination at the end of Form 3. The certificate is awarded to those who attain the prescribed level and standard of progress. The examination is a unified national one. The SSC is either awarded as a distinction, credit or pass. An average percentage is obtained from seven subjects taken as part of the examination; these include four core subjects—Arabic, English, mathematics and Islamic/Christian religion. Alternatively, the school certificate may be marked as follows: 1, outstanding; 2, very good; 3, good; 4-6, pass with credit; 7-8, pass; and 9, fail.

In 1994, 116,638 students sat the SSC examination (both academic and technical). A total of 64,400 passed and 28% proceeded to the higher level. In 1995, 130,061 students sat the examination and 80,809 passed. About 43% of successful candidates continued their studies at the higher level.

“The total number of candidates from general, vocational, and religious secondary schools sitting for the SSC examinations increased from about 260,000 in 2004 to 363,000 in 2008. In 2008, 39% of the students came from public schools, 21% from private schools, 29% from Teachers' Union programmes, and 11% were 'informal' candidates. On average, girls performed better than boys on the examinations. Close to 74% of girls passed, compared with 69% of boys. The average national pass rate was 74-75% for students from public and private schools and for informal candidates, compared with 65% for students from Teachers' Union programmes, a pattern that has remained stable since 2004. The lower average pass rate for students from Teachers' Union programs is primarily the result of the role served by these schools. They tend to cater to students who want to repeat the final grade of the secondary cycle in order to improve their results on the SSC examination and to students who previously failed the examinations while attending one of the other types of schools.” (World Bank, 2012).

The Sudan Household Health Survey (SHHS) carried out in 2006 showed that nationwide, only less than one-fifth (18.9%) of the children of secondary school age (age group 14-16 years) were attending secondary school or higher level institutions at the time of the survey. The net attendance rate (NAR) for boys was 16.5% compared to 21.9% for girls. The NAR was only 1.3% among children from the poorest households compared to 49.5% among children from the richest households.



There were large variations in the NAR among states, e.g. from a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 41.6%. (GoNU & GoSS, 2007; data refer to both northern and southern states).

In 2008/09, the total enrolment at the secondary level in northern Sudan was 734,859 students, of whom 707,654 in academic secondary and 27,205 in technical secondary education; girls made up 49% of enrolments in academic secondary. About 18% of students in academic secondary were enrolled in private or NGO schools. There were 3,339 general secondary schools and 170 technical secondary schools (the latter only in the public sector). The number of teachers was 41,249 in general secondary and 1,915 in technical secondary. An additional 1,450 students were enrolled in Islamic education. The gross enrolment ration (GER) for secondary education was estimated at 34% in 2008/09. About 36% of students repeat the final year of secondary education. About 87% of secondary school completers continue on to higher education. (World Bank, 2012).

### Assessing learning achievement nationwide

“The education sector shows weak learning outcomes. A student learning assessment administered in 195 schools across three states (Kassala, North Kordofan, and River Nile) in 2009 found that student learning outcomes were generally weak: the average male student in the sample answered only 35% of the mathematics questions correctly and 38% of the reading questions compared to 37% and 41%, respectively, for the average female student. Within the sample, girls on average performed significantly better than boys. Students among the richest 20% performed better on average than students in the middle 60%, who in turn performed better than students in the poorest 20%. Northern Sudan does not currently have a system to continuously assess student learning. The Government of National Unity should consider instituting a national student learning assessment system, which can be combined with data on school resources from the new Education Management Information System, in order to identify factors that promote or hinder learning.” (World Bank, 2012).

### Teaching staff

“In 1993, the pre-service qualification for basic education teachers was revised from a two-year teaching diploma to a four-year bachelor of education (B.Ed.) degree. The two-year diploma course was offered by a network of 73 in-service education training institutes (ISETI) across northern Sudan. Teachers attended the institutes one day per week and taught in the schools for the remainder of the work week. Funding for the ISETI diploma ceased in 1993, and the staff of the larger training institutes were absorbed into the universities as faculties of education, which would ultimately be responsible for qualifying basic education teachers through the B.Ed. degree. The pre-service qualification for a secondary school teacher in northern Sudan is a four-year bachelor of education (B.Ed.) degree offered by faculties of education in universities. These faculties are responsible for developing both the content of the training and the accreditation process for teachers in secondary schools. As part the education sector reform in 1993, responsibility for pre-service teacher training was transferred from the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). At the time, few students were enrolling in the B.Ed. degree programme, and even fewer were successfully graduating and eventually





teaching. This situation may have occurred because teachers were still being hired regardless of whether they had a B.Ed. In 2003, the Sudan Open University (SOU) introduced a partial B.Ed. degree course for teachers who were in service and had no B.Ed. The SOU also introduced a one-year diploma in education for graduates of other disciplines. By 2004, the MoGE stopped funding teachers through faculties of education and funded them solely through the SOU. In 2008, it was estimated that only 10% percent of basic education teachers were officially qualified, though these numbers have presumably increased since the graduation of three years of B.Ed. students, from 2008 through 2010.” (World Bank, 2012).

The teacher education curriculum include academic courses, professional training in educational and developmental psychology, teaching methods and lesson planning, and practical training. New subjects have been introduced such as population, health and environmental education.

“In a recent study (2008) on pre-service education in the northern states it was found that the curriculum followed in the pre-service degree programme was strong on theory and content, but weak at providing practical teaching skills for instruction in primary schools. A similar evaluation has repeatedly been made by state and federal officials responsible for managing basic education at the state and central levels, respectively. The study recommends a review of the pre-service training methodology in place at the university level and in terms of its appropriateness for instructing students in basic education, especially taking into account the reactions of the state authorities.” (World Bank, 2009).

Only 12% of the estimated 140,000 basic education teachers hold the required qualification of a four-year university degree. Approximately 50% of the basic education teachers are considered untrained. Similarly, also 50% of the estimated 34,000 secondary school teachers are not trained. (UNESCO, 2008).

Teachers’ workload is twenty-four weekly hours at the basic school level and twenty-two hours at the secondary level. Four to six hours per week on average are dedicated to other educational activities. According to the findings of the 2007 baseline survey on basic education in the northern states of Sudan, the teaching load per week was less than 20 hours for 59.9% of teachers, between 20 and 25 hours for 29.1% of teachers, and more than 26 hours for 11% of teachers. (FMGE, 2008).

“The teaching profession for basic education in northern Sudan comprises mainly female teachers, who account for roughly two-thirds of the workforce (67%). Female teachers constitute more than 60% of teachers in most states. In secondary education, female teachers constitute 56% of the teaching workforce. It is estimated that 38% of the teachers in northern Sudan had not received any formal education training in 2009. Only a subset of those classified as trained had earned the prerequisite B.Ed. degree. Notably, 82% of the teachers in Western Darfur were considered trained, though it is not known what percentage of these teachers had the minimum requirement of the B.Ed. degree. Blue Nile had the highest percentage of untrained teachers (73%), while Al Qadarif, Kassala, and Southern Darfur had approximately 50% untrained teachers.” (World Bank, 2012).

“ISETI headquarters in the Federal Ministry and its state branches continue to organize in-service training courses. Apart from the 36-day certificate course, training courses are generally between three and 14 days and focus on informing teachers about curricula changes, as well as specific subjects. The responsibility for funding in-service training is decentralized to the states, but UNICEF and the multidonor-financed Basic Education Project make significant contributions in this regard.” (*Ibid.*).

“Teachers are supervised by head teachers, education councils, and local or state (depending on the available capacity) inspectors. The inspectors are former teachers, often approaching retirement age, and are attached to state or local education units. Across states in both basic and secondary education, teachers are supposed to be monitored two to four times per year by the state or inspector. Inspectors supervise the performance only of regular teachers, whereas volunteer or national service and part-time teachers are generally supervised by the education councils, which use different standards. This divide is of particular concern in preschool, where more than a third of teachers are volunteers or national service staff. Teachers working in rural, IDP, and nomadic schools do not receive any additional benefits from the government. Communities in some rural schools provide additional incentives (either in cash or in kind) for teachers to attract them to those areas. This means that the poorest rural communities cannot compete with other, more wealthy rural communities that offer a better standard of living.” (*Ibid.*).

In view of the urgent need for a mass teaching force to meet the pressing needs at the basic level and the limited output of the colleges of education, a new policy option must be sought to address the need and to maintain quality. The new policy of teacher reform should take into consideration the pressing demand of upgrading and training of new teachers as well as the retraining of teachers. The development and adoption of a new two-year diploma as the basic qualification for the basic school teachers, is considered to be the best way out of this dilemma. The old in-service teacher training institutes can be reopened and rehabilitated to be entrusted with the conduction of the proposed diploma programme. Candidates should be chosen from among the successful secondary school leavers. This reform has to be considered as an interim step towards the overall solution of the problem of teacher education and training. This reform is not a deviation from the previous requirements of a minimum qualification of a four-year bachelor degree since the holders of the diploma will be allowed to continue their higher education after a period of teaching in the basic school. (FMOE, 2004)

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## Web resources

Federal Ministry of General Education: <http://www.moe.gov.sd/> [In Arabic; some information in English. Last checked: May 2012.]

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research: <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/> [In Arabic. Last checked: May 2012.]

*For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>*